



# AMAA

NEWS



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**2018**

**Avedisian School Choir Performs at  
AMAA Centennial Celebration in Yerevan**



## AMAA NEWS

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**Cover Photo:** The Avedisian School Choir singing Թող բարին տիրի (Let goodness reign) at the AMAA Centennial Cultural Event in Yerevan, led by composer Edward Zorikian).



# Founded on the Rock

*Therefore whoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall for it was founded on the rock. **Matthew 7:24-25***

By **Nazareth E. Darakjian, M.D.**, AMAA President

The Centennial year is over. The celebrations that started in New Jersey one year ago went on to Sydney, Beirut, Yerevan, Paris, Montreal, Toronto and reached its climactic conclusion in Los Angeles on October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018. These celebrations created beautiful opportunities for fellowship and strengthening of bonds, renewing old friendships, creating new ones, coming together as one church, the one body of Christ.

It was a wonderful time that gave us a chance to pay tribute to those who founded the Association 100 years ago in Worcester, Massachusetts. We recognized all those whose dedication and sacrifice helped the Association grow in leaps and bounds to acquire the capabilities it has today. We acknowledged the positive impact the AMAA has left on individuals and communities that benefitted from the support and encouragement that has made the AMAA so important in the life of our nation. Most importantly, we thanked and praised God for His guidance and blessings throughout a century, while we as a nation at times found ourselves walking through the valley of the shadow of death.

As an organization we are happy and proud to have made it to this important milestone. But the party is over. We now have the challenge and responsibility to plan for the second century, to continue the work that was started and to do just as well if not better than those that came and went.

In this respect we are fortunate that from its early days the AMAA has been blessed with far sighted leadership and directors. These visionaries were not simply satisfied by meeting the needs of the day, but planned for the future, by encouraging the creation of endowment funds that were invested prudently producing steady income. We have resolved to continue that tradition by establishing the Centennial Campaign, to augment our capabilities, and prepare us to deal with the challenges that our churches, schools, summer camps and humanitarian initiatives may face. We want to be able to extend our horizons and enlarge our mission to reach out to communities that do not have shepherds and are thirsty for the Word of God. We also want to rejuvenate the 170 plus year old Armenian Evangelical tradition of establishing schools where our children will learn the Word of God and be inspired by our rich culture and heritage.

How do we plan for the next century? How do we make sure that one hundred years from now there will be another AMAA Centennial celebration just as sublime, just as beautiful? I believe that the answer is in Matthew 7:24-25. As long as we listen, as long as we hear, and as long as we do what Christ has told us to do the AMAA of the future remains on a foundation of rock and future generations will look back at us and say, "they were wise." On the other hand, if we fail to take heed to what Christ has instructed us to do then all our structures will crumble, and our efforts will be in vain.

A lot has changed in the world in the last 100 years, and I am sure 100 years from now the world be a totally different kind of place. What will not change is the Word of God and the Great Commission that Jesus gave us to spread the Word to the ends of the earth.

Let us continue to be faithful to that Commission. □



Dear Friends:

**“I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.”**

**John 12:46**

Christmas lights are quite often considered as one of the best highlights of the Christmas Season. How many of us have driven by homes, stores or even attended an event for the lighting of a tree? Those twinkling lights bring so much hope and excitement. Why? Let us not forget that they serve as a reminder that Jesus is the light of the world!

Building upon a 100-year-old foundation of love and service, the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) upholds carrying forth His light and promise of hope to vulnerable brothers and sisters, young and old, whose lives have been invaded by darkness and despair. Whether it be serving the needs of the poor, empowering young people through education, providing humanitarian relief -as a result of ongoing geopolitical turmoil or creating opportunities for social stability and growth.

You help us to help them and fulfill our mission in twenty-four countries around the world. AMAA's Mission and Service Fund supports the annual operating budget, which includes, but is not limited to: Armenia and Syria relief, Armenian Children's Milk Fund infant formula distribution, education in schools, 'Shogh' day centers, Sponsorship Programs, medical clinics, summer camps, and spreading the Good News.

**Brighten a life this Christmas.** Take this opportunity today to make your donation. Every gift counts, no matter how big or small.

**May the blessing of His birth remain a light in your life.** We offer our prayers and sing praises to our most gracious God to be with you, your family and loved ones throughout the 'Season of Light' and the New Year ahead.

Քրիստոս ծնաւ եւ յայտնեցաւ. ձեզի, մեզի Մեծ Աւետիս!  
Krisdos dzenav yev haydnetzav, tsezee, mezee Medz Avedis!  
(Christ is born and is revealed, good tidings to you and to us).

Sincerely,

**Zaven Khanjian**  
AMAA Executive Director/CEO







# When Faith Blazes into Action

By Gilbert Bilezikian, Th.D.\*

It is hoped that those of you who received the last issue of the AMAA News are keeping your copy as a collector's item in the making. This unique document bears witness to the courage of Armenian Christians who banded together in the aftermath of our Genocide to reach out self-sacrificially and bring relief to situations of desperate need through the length and breadth of this century of Armenian history. The noble story is worth keeping and pondering.

The introductory page of the issue says it all. The news of the devastating 1988 earthquake in Armenia came to the comfortable, suburban Simourian home near Boston as a bombshell. Michele looked at her husband and, with sobs choking her voice, she said, *"John, we've got to do something."* As a result, at the height of the Cold War, a secret operation was staged between the United States and the Soviet Union to fly to Armenia millions of dollars' worth of medical equipment that saved countless numbers of lives.

In all human languages, there exists no loftier declaration than God's self-introduction to mankind, *"In the beginning God created heavens and earth."* (Book of Genesis, chapter one, verse one)

The very first words of the Bible present God as the magnificent giver of all existence. He gives infinite space, time and life in all their variegated splendor. The New Testament puts it well *"In Him all things consist."* God is the first, the supreme and the ultimate giver.

But His greatest gift is the creation of beings in His image. He not only gives, but He also gives Himself. He creates humans endowed with His likeness with His image. Because they thus portray on earth God in Heaven, they themselves become givers. God gives them the mandate to multiply and extend His giving love to *"the ends of the earth."* This universal reflection on earth of the giving love of God defines the driving purpose of human existence. We are givers because God is our model universal giver.

Unfortunately, we all know that it did not work the way it had been intended by God. He had warned humans against the temptation to become takers. We take of the forbidden fruit and, ignoring the warning, we become self-gratifying parasites instead of self-dispensing portrayals of the self-giving God.

This vast world, in which we live, still bears the mark of the goodness that had been invested in it by the Creator. But, we also experience daily the horrible devastations caused by the slithering intrusion of death, the dark taker of life, the author of suffering of plagues, hunger, homelessness, genocides, murderous earthquakes, senseless wars and human desolation. But God remains the loving giver. When all seems to be irremediably lost, He does not give up, but He gives the Redeemer, who gives His life, to bring us to repentance and enable us to become again the image on earth of the Giver in Heaven.

At the end of His ministry on earth and shortly before His self-sacrificial death, Jesus Christ gave a striking summation of His teaching about the purpose of life for each one of us. The story is found in the Gospel of Matthew Chapter 25 verses 31 to 40. It would be worth your while to consult a Bible right now.

As you can see, in this text, Jesus gives a prophetic preview of the last judgment at the end of time. Two groups are gathered in front of Him. He commends the crowds to His right reminding them that they: gave Him food when He was hungry, gave Him water when He was thirsty, welcomed Him when He was a stranger, put clothes on Him when He was naked, visited Him when He was sick and came to Him when He was in prison. The people to His right looked at Him



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uncomprehendingly and said, “Good Sir, you’ve got it wrong. We never saw you in such situations. We cannot take the credit for those good deeds.”

The King answered, “Whenever you reached out to invest yourself into a situation of distress that had fallen beyond the capacity for self-help, I was there wanting to meet this need and you did it for me. Come with me into eternal life.”

The other group of those to His left had been derelict in similar circumstances. They had failed to meet needs, as Christ would have wanted to do. Having refused to identify themselves with the great Giver, they received in eternal life the alienation that they had opted for in this life.

The first observation to understand the full impact of this narrative:

## **The Giving of Food**

In biblical times, the would-be giver could not go to the local supermarket, get a few bags full of victuals and bring them to the hungry. Food was the most precious commodity for personal and family survival. At subsistence level, it was not easy to come by. Each home was responsible for the production of their own food. Bread was the basic food staple. The making of bread was a long and arduous process. It required plowing, sowing, praying for rain, harvesting, winnowing, grinding grain into flour, the availability of an oven made of stones, and finding wood for the fire. The process was similarly demanding for the supply of meat, vegetables, and for the preparation of dried food for the long winter season.

## **The Giving of Water**

In the mostly deserts climate of biblical lands, people could not go to the kitchen tap to instantly obtain fresh, drinkable water. They had to walk daily to the local well or cistern, wait for their turn, draw the water from deep holes dug into limestone, fill heavy jars and hand-carry the precious resource sometimes a long way home.

## **Hosting the Stranger**

In biblical times, there was a constant flow of refugees who were fleeing their homes to escape famine, wars, marauders and epidemics. They would arrive in closed communities not knowing customs or language and without work or family contacts. They became hated pariahs, begging for acceptance and trekking their misery from town to town.

## **Clothes for the Naked**

Worse come to worse we can always go to a thrift store and walk out decently dressed. In ancient days, when spinning wheels and looms had not yet been invented, the yarn was made by hand with a distaff and a spindle from organic fibers like flax and wool. This was a long process that produced cloth that was fragile and uncomfortable to wear. Nice clothes were for the wealthy. The poor did their best with rejects and rags.

## **Visiting the Sick**

Certainly not in hospitals! Illness was considered a punishment for secret sins. Consequently, the sick were abandoned to their misery, to face pain and death in isolation.

## **Visiting the Prisoner**

Society protected itself from criminals and the demented by locking them up in cages, caves, abandoned hamlets, crumbling dungeons, and underground tunnels. A Roman historian describes them as “hideous and terrifying” places of “neglect, darkness and stench.”

The second observation refers to the fact that those who have committed themselves to meet the needs described above had not acted out of the desire to be saved. They inherited eternal life because their faith commitment compelled them to obedience. It was their life of self-sacrificing giving that bore witness to the genuineness of their faith. They were not saved by their works, but by their faith that translated into action. “Faith without works is dead.” (See the Epistle of James in the New Testament.)

In the sweep of Armenian history, the direct survivors of the Genocide have died and gone to their eternal destiny. Their children, like the ranks of my own generation, are about to pass on. However, the brokenness of our world will remain. It will require the intervention of faithful givers and helpers to meet such perennial challenges. In the face of such needs, may our legacy to the next generation be the rallying heart-cry, “John, we’ve got to do something!” □

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\*Dr. Gilbert Bilezikian is Professor Emeritus of Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois.



# Meet Our Veteran Pastors

## Rev. John Khanjian, Ph.D.



By Tanya Khanjian Stevens

**T**he Rev. Dr. John Khanjian was born in Aleppo, Syria in 1932 and received his elementary education at Bethel School and secondary education at Aleppo College for Boys. During these years he started the Star Youth Group at the Church of Christ (ACO). While receiving his education in Beirut at the Near East School of Theology (BD 1963) and the American University of Beirut (BA 1962 and MA 1968), Rev. Dr. Khanjian established the Armenian Evangelical Boy Scout troop at the First Armenian Evangelical Church. He completed his education at Claremont Graduate University (PhD 1974).

Rev. Dr. Khanjian spent his summers filling pulpits in Kamishly, Damascus and Aleppo. Upon graduation from theological studies in January 1963, he returned to Aleppo College as a teacher of religion at the Girls and Boys schools, Chaplain and Chair of the Religion Department, and became the CE youth leader and choir director of the Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church where his wife, Pauline Alexanian, was the pianist of the Church.

In 1966, Rev. Dr. Khanjian left for the United States to pursue his graduate studies. Upon completion of his course work, he returned to the Near East School of Theology in 1971 as Assistant Professor, Librarian, and Field Work Director to the Armenian students. During the summers he led youth camps in Syria and Lebanon. The Lebanese Civil War forced Rev. Dr. Khanjian and his family to relocate to the United States in 1976. In 1978, he was invited to the position of Associate Professor of Religion and Philosophy at Kansas Wesleyan University where he served as Chairman for ten years and prepared many ministers for the United Methodist Church.

During this time Rev. Dr. Khanjian continued his relationship with the Armenian Evangelical churches in the

Near East and was invited by the AMAA to serve the summer camps in Syria and Lebanon for youth in 1978, 1980, and 1982. In 1987, he was invited to become the Academic Dean at the Armenian American International College of the University of La Verne in California where he worked until its closure in 1993.

In 1995, Rev. Dr. Khanjian became the President of Haigazian College in Beirut, Lebanon where he served until 2002. During his tenure the old campus was renovated and refurbished, and the institution returned to its campus in West Beirut. In 1997, Haigazian College was accredited by the Lebanese Ministry of Education as a University; the academic programs were updated, policies and procedures introduced, and a solid foundation established for further development.

Upon his return to the United States, Rev. Dr. Khanjian returned to teaching at the University of La Verne as Senior Adjunct Professor of Religion and Philosophy from 2003 to 2007. In 2007, Rev. Dr. Khanjian was invited by the AMAA to be Provost and Professor at the Evangelical Theological Academy of Armenia in Yerevan due to the need for a fulltime administrator. He served in these positions until 2010 when he once again returned to the United States and resumed teaching at the University of La Verne until his retirement in 2017.

Rev. Dr. Khanjian has published multiple scholarly articles, two books in Armenian for the seminary, and recently authored the “History of the Armenian Missionary Association of America” for the AMAA in English and Armenian.

In 1963, Dr. Khanjian married Pauline Alexanian who also taught at Aleppo College for Girls and established the Education Department at Haigazian University; they have two children, Tanya Joy and Jonathan Alex. □



# Evangelical Church of Armenia In GYUMRI



**Gyumri**, an urban municipal community, is the second largest city in Armenia and serves as the administrative center of Shirak Province in the northwestern part of the country. It was founded and developed as a city in the 18th century and, until the establishment of the Soviet order, the city was called Alexandropol. Alexandropol had all the features of a modern city, with a unique urban culture, active intelligentsia, economically and culturally advanced, and located at the crossroads of trade routes. Alexandropol also had strategic significance in a political sense as one of the most important cities in Transcaucasia, under the Russian Empire. This was also a remarkable area for Armenian Evangelicals. From the national archives of the Republic of Armenia it is clear that at the end of the 1840s there were small Armenian Evangelical communities. This means that the Armenian Evangelicalism in Eastern Armenia began spreading in unison with Western Armenia making this area one of the most important centers for Armenian Evangelicals in Eastern Armenia.

During the Soviet era, Alexandropol was renamed Leninakan. The city's population grew to over 200,000 prior to the devastating 1988 Earthquake, when several cities and villages were ruined. At the time of the Soviet Union break up, between 1990 and 1992, the city was renamed to its historical name Kumayri from the Urartu period, and later it was given the name Gyumri.

Soon after the 1988 Earthquake, the Armenian Missionary Association of America began serving the Homeland with a variety of services and in 1991 established its first office in Gyumri and further organized its activities in the city.

In September 1999, a Sunday School was established under the guidance of Grigor Vardanyan's initiative and in November 2000 Rev. Hamlet Kyureghyan, Pastor of the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Yerevan, started visiting Gyumri for Sunday Worship Services and officially established the Church. Initially, only parents of children attending Sunday School attended the Worship Services. Over time, the Church organized and expanded its services and activities. For several years, four brothers led the Gyumri Church and preached: Armen Tadevosyan, Gagik Danielyan, Karen Manukyan, and Grigor Vardanyan who attended and graduated from the Armenian Evangelical Theological Academy. In 2012, Rev. Kyureghyan started to lead the Church as its Pastor. For six years, under his leadership, the Church went through a new phase of self-organization and formation. The spiritual level of the Community increased and established an Armenian Evangelical self-consciousness. At present, the Armenian Evangelical Church



*Pastor Aram Babajanyan.*





of Gyumri has 77 baptized members and every Sunday the average attendance at Sunday Worship Services is 85-100 people.

Currently the Church has 18 service groups including Bible Study Group, Women's Group (25-30 women), Prayer Group, Sunday School (80 children), Adolescent (40) and Youth (25) Groups, as well as leadership seminars. The Church also has artistic and educational groups such as dance, design, crafts, painting, and woodworking.

Since September 16, 2018, Pastor Aram Babajanyan, a graduate of the Near East School of Theology with an M.Div. degree, is serving the Gyumri Church as its full-time Pastor. On September 30, the dedication of the magnificent newly constructed Gyumri Church and Community Center took place. The construction of this new church building is an important turning point for the Church and for the Armenian Evangelicals in the area. It expresses a tangible evidence and confirms its historical presence in Gyumri. And, it is a new force and a motivation for the Church to spread the Gospel of Christ in Gyumri and to awaken Armenian Evangelism. □

*(Original text written in Eastern Armenian by Pastor Aram Babajanyan and translated into English by Louisa Janbazian)*



Armenian Evangelical Ministers from different parts of the world participate in the Dedication Service of the newly constructed Gyumri Church, on September 30, 2018.





# AMAA Celebrates Centennial Anniversary at The Millennium Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles

By Phyllis Hamo

Sponsors and guests of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) will long remember the Los Angeles Centennial Banquet of October 20, 2018. The event was the concluding Banquet and largest function of eight worldwide observances that marked 100 years of commitment and generosity by the AMAA. Board members, clergy, and supporters of the organization came together at this joyful event held at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles, a classic meeting place which opened its doors for the first time in 1923, just 5 years after the AMAA was founded.

The very first of the Centennial observances took place in October 2017, in Teaneck, New Jersey, near the AMAA's Paramus Headquarters. The final Banquet at the Biltmore capped off more than a year of these worldwide Centennial celebrations. Celebratory banquets were also held in Sydney, Detroit, Montreal, Toronto, Beirut, Paris, and Yerevan.

The noteworthy Los Angeles event paid tribute to the Stephen Philibosian and Conte Foundations, the Gerald and Patricia Turpanjian – TF Educational Foundation, and the Sheen Family Trust. In addition to the honorees, their families and friends, as well as leaders and sustainers of the Armenian Missionary Association of America, the crowd enthusiastically celebrated a century of “faith, love, and service” when more than 500 celebrants gathered in the Biltmore's elegant Crystal Ballroom.

Guests traveled long distances, some from as far away as Armenia, Australia, France, Lebanon, and Syria. Many representatives journeyed to Los Angeles to celebrate a century of successful mission programs and the establishment of churches, camps, and schools founded and supported by the AMAA in 24 countries. The AMAA has set a fundraising goal of \$20 million dollars for the Centennial Campaign and raised 60% of the goal.

The Los Angeles Banquet was MC'd by prominent presidential



*Dr. Nazareth Darakjian with honoree Joyce Philibosian Stein.*



*Zaven Khanjian with honorees Patricia and Gerald Turpanjian.*



speechwriter Ken Khachigian who introduced both the current President of the AMAA, Dr. Nazareth E. Darakjian, and the AMAA's Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian who are working tirelessly to reach out to "friends of the AMAA" for their support.

Retiring West Coast Executive Director Levon Filian was thanked for his many years of dedicated service to the AMAA as Executive Director, then as West Coast Executive Director.

An AMAA Centennial video was shown which depicted the founding of the AMAA, its worldwide operations, ministries and projects.

Dr. Darakjian recognized Dr. Albert Phillips, founder of the AMAA Medical Mission to Armenia, established ten years ago, describing him as the "Albert Schweitzer of Armenia."

Following the Dinner, a video presentation by Tina Segel gave historic information regarding Honorees Stephen Philibosian Foundation, the Conte Foundation, the Gerald and Patricia Turpanjian – TF Educational Foundation and the Sheen Family Trust.

Kenneth Kevorkian introduced Joe and Joyce Philibosian Stein and recognized their decades of generosity and service to the AMAA and its mission, following the path of Stephen Philibosian, father of Joyce and her sister Louise, who established the very first AMAA endowment, created in his name. Sirpuhe Philibosian Conte and her husband John Conte also became life long benefactors of the AMAA.

Elizabeth Agbabian introduced Gerald and Patricia Turpanjian. "This unique couple," she announced, "is modest, sincere, and caring. They have raised an exemplary family of four: Lori, Gary, Deanne, and Paul, who are here with their children to honor their mother and father." "The Turpanjians," according to Mrs. Agbabian, "have also adopted an extended family named Benevolence. They are Godparents of the Armenian Community – generously sharing their bounty of the Turpanjian Family Educational Foundation." Gerald and Patricia Turpanjian and their TF (Turpanjian Family) Educational Foundation were honored, not only for their support of the AMAA, but also for their support of the American University of Armenia, the Armenian General Benevolent Union, Haigazian University, the Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School, Camp Hankavan, AMAA Child and Orphan Care, Syrian Relief, and the Armenian Evangelical Central High School, attended by alumnus

Gerald Turpanjian.

Dr. H. Steven Aharonian recognized Dr. Jack Sheen and his late father John H. Sheen who established the Sheen Family Trust with the AMAA providing support to education, relief in Armenia and Lebanon, evangelism, and aid to churches and missions. Through the legacy of the John H. Sheen Trust, thousands of children attending AMAA's Sheen-Shoghig Camp in Hankavan, Armenia receive spiritual and physical nourishment.

The Banquet's Invocation was offered by Rev. Berdj Djambazian, Minister to the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America; the Benediction by Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, Executive Director of the Armenian Evangelical World Council. The American and Armenian national anthems and music were led by Maestro Greg Hosharian.

Guests received a beautifully published 114-page commemorative booklet containing the history of the AMAA written by Rev. John Khanjian Ph.D., and descriptions of its worldwide missions. It also included congratulatory letters from around the world. The Banquet Co-Chairs Lori Muncherian, Arsine Phillips, Helga Sarkis, and Tina Segel worked earnestly with their Committee to produce a memorable evening.

A profound statement highlighted in the booklet came from AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian who stated, "Not



*Zaven Khanjian with Arch. Hovnan Derderian.*



*AMAA West Coast Executive Director Levon Filian.*



*Kenneth Kevorkian.*



*Elizabeth Agbabian.*



*MC Kenneth Khachigian.*



*H. Steven Aharonian, M.D.*

empires, nor structures, simply put, our focus is on the individual. Building, rebuilding and making a difference in the life of the individual. Our collective act is summed up by how we impact the spiritual and physical wellbeing of our people – one life at a time.” According to Dr. Darakjian, the AMAA has come a long way in its 100-year history in accomplishing its mission. “We are carrying a torch that has come to us from our predecessors, and it is our duty to run with it and pass it on to future generations.”

In his closing remarks, Mr. Khanjian summed up the year-long effort. “The only sense and justification in our year-old celebration and the \$20M Capital Campaign is in the vision of embracing the future in the Homeland, the Middle East, Europe, the Americas and everywhere the grace of God takes us.”

There are many giving and naming opportunities still available during the Centennial Campaign. Information for giving may be obtained by contacting Magda Poulos at the AMAA Headquarters in Paramus, 201.265.2607 or mpoulos@amaa.org. The AMAA office is located at 31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652. □



Banquet Co-Chairs Tina Segel, Lori Muncherian, Helga Sarkis and Arsine Phillips.

## Centennial Message

*(The following message was delivered by Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO, at the AMAA Annual Banquet, October 20, 2018 in Los Angeles)*

What an amazing evening!!

Thank you, Banquet Co-Chairs and Committee. We're so delighted to have a dynamic Master of Ceremonies tonight. Dear Ken, if this was an election campaign, you have secured a victory for us. Congratulations, and thank you to all the honorees. It's the gracious spirit of philanthropy that fuels the mission of the AMAA. Thank you all for your presence and support. You are the heart and soul of the Armenian Missionary Association of America.

Banquets are done with, cakes are consumed, candles blown out. What now?

Three years ago, at the genesis of our deliberations, our Centennial Campaign theme **set the tone**—'Faithful to Our Legacy, Embracing the Future.'

We paid tribute to the legacy, revered the founders, published their story and dignified their service and sacrifice. We hopped on five continents (Africa joined us in Beirut), held banquets, offered prayers and praises in a multitude of services.

The last of the celebrations was in the Homeland. Over a span of eight days, we had six remarkable events celebrating a Century of Faith, Love, and Service to the nation. A concert, a play, an art exhibition, a multi-media cultural event at the Opera, a banquet and the dedication of AMAA's new Gyumri Church and cultural center. All glamorous, well attended and joyful events in the Homeland, where the AMAA has been a blessing for 30 years following the devastating earthquake of 1988.

Then one day, during the week and on a visit to an AMAA sponsored child, there came a moment of reckoning. The area visited was Kanaker. Yes, Khachadour Abovian's Kanaker, where the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century educator and intellectual lived. The sponsored family was a descendant of Abovian.

The two-story structure housed the families of two brothers. The sponsored child lived on the second floor with five of his siblings. Climbing the unstable stairs was literally an adventure. The 500 or so square feet of space consisted of two bedrooms, with a separation wall ready to collapse, an 'everything' room and a combined kitchen, bath and storage area. A common toilet for the two families was set outside the structure. Walls around the house had cracks. The six children ranged from a toddler to a 15-year-old boy who was out on a scant job with his father. The mother supplemented the family income, hairdressing in homes. While we hardly held back our emotions, the family seemed happy. The children sang and recited. They had dreams in their glowing eyes. **They were the future of Armenia!**

We exist in a span of time that some define as present. But the present is only a blinking eye between the past and the future.

**The only sense and justification in our year-old celebration and the \$20M Capital Campaign are in the vision of embracing the future.** At any time building on the legacy of the past will only reap the blessings of the future.

What do we build? We build lives.

Lives of the sponsored family children in Kanaker or Noyemperyan, Askeran or Goris, North Hollywood or Aleppo, Beirut or Buenos Aires. Taking them out of poverty, offering spiritual nourishment, quality education, vital healthcare and sowing hope for a brighter future in the Homeland, the Middle East, Europe, the Americas and everywhere the grace of God takes us.

Standing tall, the AMAA is the sower. We are called to sow hope, win a smile, realize a dream, feed the hungry and save a soul.

Partner with us. Together, we'll embrace the second century of the AMAA.....and make it brighter. Thank you.



# In the Homeland of Armenia, Celebrating AMAA's Century of Faith, Love and Service

By Elise Kalfayan

The peaceful morning bus drive from Yerevan to Gyumri for the dedication of the new AMAA Community Center and Church on Sunday, September 30 was a time of reflection and joyful anticipation. This would be the last of six major events during the AMAA's Centennial in the Homeland of Armenia, all taking place within a week.

The AMAA leadership honored its founders at all the events and presented a vision for the next 100 years: evangelism, education, humanitarian relief, and youth programs in the Homeland.

## Gyumri



Multiple buses and vans carried AMAA Board members, supporters, volunteers and staff; Armenian Evangelical pastors from Armenia as well as the Near East, the Americas, and other unions; and AMAA Tour members to Gyumri. We joined a large complement from Gyumri gathering in the courtyard of the colorful, large complex.

Following a short performance by the Center's dance students, Director Karen Manukyan and Gyumri Armenian Evangelical Church Pastor Aram Babajanyan welcomed guests and dignitaries. Gyumri Mayor Samvel Balasanyan congratulated the AMAA and praised the Center as a spiritual, educational, and cultural Center that will enrich the lives of residents. AMAA President Dr. Nazareth Darakjian said, "We hope that this will be a Community

Center where people from all walks of life, from all persuasions and affiliations, young and old, will come to meet each other, build friendships, understand each others' problems, and extend a helping hand whenever someone needs it."

Benefactors Drs. Nazareth and Ani Darakjian unveiled the building plaque. Hratch and Helga Sarkis were present and honored with a plaque for Hratch's dedicated supervision of the building project and as major donors of the project. We were invited inside, and room plaques were unveiled to reveal their sponsors. Present on the occasion were room sponsors Ken and Thelma Churukian Kevorkian, Dr. Michael and Wendy Churukian, Rev. Ara Guekguezian (representing Knar Guekguezian), and Michael and Any Yacoub-Barr.

Day Center craft instructors were in classrooms to show children's work in weaving, embroidery, painting, and wood carving. After the tour, the church was filled to capacity for a service of praise and dedication. Armenian Evangelical pastors from around the world participated. The service began with a video of Armenian Evangelical congregations in Armenia, the Near East, and the Americas all singing "How Great Thou Art!" We had been celebrating the AMAA's past accomplishments, we were joyful about its future work in this beautiful new building, and the video told the story of the present: congregations around the world united in faith, love and service.

## Sunday Preview from the Pulpit



The previous week, the Evangelical Church of Armenia and Artsakh had conducted a thanksgiving worship service in Yerevan,



with AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian present. On that occasion, he said, “Our founders wanted to rebuild churches on Armenian soil. We came to Armenia and built churches just as our founders imagined. We have an independent Armenia, a dream of the generations who survived the Genocide. God has given us a mission to be a light of illumination and faith in this dark region. Together with the mother church we will continue!” His speech in the church set the tone for the six events that followed.

## Musical Ensemble of Armavir Church



On September 23, the Armenian Evangelical Armavir Choir gave a concert at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Yerevan. Soloists Mareta Antonyan and Armen Avetisyan sang spiritual, national, and folk songs. Each song was eloquently introduced by two women, one who recited in Armenian and the other in English. The prefaces offered thanks for the AMAA and its founders, expressions of love for the Homeland of Armenia, and praise to God. They perfectly expressed the connection of each piece to the day’s theme of thanksgiving.

Said Zaven Khanjian after the concert, “Though Armenia is not rich in oil or other minerals, the invaluable capital of our country has been and remains human potential. There is bright evidence of it here tonight.”

## The Angel of Salvation



Tuesday, September 25, Playwright/Director Nune Abrahamyan and the Hayasa Theatrical Group produced “The Angel of Salvation,” based on Rev. Hovhannes Eskijian’s work during the Armenian Genocide rescuing hundreds of children from deportation as they passed through Aleppo. Genocide scholar Hilmar Kaiser’s book *At the Crossroads of Der Zor* contains the history and was the basis for Abrahamyan’s script. Kaiser was present and told the

audience that history shows humanitarian missions in the Near East during the Armenian Genocide began with Rev. Hovhannes Eskijian and Armenian Evangelicals.

After the moving drama, AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian said, “Many Armenians born in Aleppo had parents who were saved by Rev. Eskijian. We remember our other Armenian Christian heroes as well: Aharon Shirazyan, Hrant Guzelian and others who saved the lives of thousands of children, so they could rebuild and serve our nation.”

Martin Eskijian, grandson of Rev. Eskijian, read the words of Jesus in Mark 8:35, “*For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whosoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.*” He told the audience that John Minassian, who as a young boy was Rev. Eskijian’s underground courier in Aleppo, visited his family later in life. “His visit made the stories I’d heard very real for me.”

## Art Exhibition



An exhibition of artworks by Armenian Evangelical artists, held in the Yerevan Artists’ Union of Armenia building (at Charles Aznavour Square), was the third Centennial event. Artist Vrej Kassouny was the exhibit curator, and Astghik Zeynalyan the designer. The opening was well attended and covered by local media. AMAA Armenia Representative Harout Nercessian noted, “Armenian Evangelicals, wherever they are, focus on art education and upbringing, and contribute to the discovery and development of the new generation’s aesthetic capacities by creating favorable conditions for them.” He cited the Shogh Day Center and the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School as examples.

## Cultural Evening: “A Century of Faith, Love and Service”



The Yerevan Opera Theatre is walking distance from Republic Square, and its entrance was jammed for the AMAA Centennial



program on Friday, September 28. AMAA Armenia Press Manager Andranik Mardoyan welcomed the full house, which included invited dignitaries, and read congratulations from many organizations.

The program featured a ballet directed by Harutyun Semerjyan, interpreting the story of creation, the fall, the evil of the Genocide, and the hope of salvation and new life, and an accompanying video by Rafael Khachatryan. The Spondiaryan Opera and Ballet headed by Armen Grigoryan performed the dance sequences. These alternated with video segments showing AMAA's founding, history, and projects in Armenia and around the world; and a solo of "Crane" by Gomidas, performed by Mareta Antonyan.

The finale featured composer Eduard Zorikyan singing "Let There Be Good in the World" with a choir of Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School students. The singing students took out their phones and started waving them as flashlights. The audience responded by lighting phones and waving them back. The whole Opera house lit up with warmth, inspiration and reflected love, a bright and fitting response of engagement with the message and mission.

## AMAA Centennial Banquet in Yerevan

Held at the Yerevan Marriott, Republic Square, the AMAA Centennial Banquet in Yerevan drew guests including many Armenian government, NGO, and ecumenical dignitaries, as well as celebrants from around the world.

Mistress of Ceremonies Sona Khanjian opened the Banquet with a quote from Rev. Dr. Peter Doghramji: "All of us in the AMAA community take a deep breath, pause a little and look back at all those exceptionally gifted leaders and their associates, who wiped the tears from the eyes of a bereaved nation and proclaimed by Word and Deed, the Good News of Jesus Christ; who rebuilt the churches and schools; reestablished the human ties among the Armenian



communities regardless of religious or political affiliation; who helped in the training of leaders and professionals. Many of us who are here tonight can gratefully call ourselves children of AMAA."

In his remarks, AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian characterized the dedication and spirit of the AMAA's work in Armenia: "The AMAA sowed indiscriminately. It sowed in the collective and diversified furrows of the nation. It sowed abundantly and generously even beyond the borders. The AMAA sowed without an expectation in return, with no demand or condition, without pomp or circumstance. It sowed in the spirit of 'Cast thy bread upon the water, trusting it is not in vain'."

All these events in Armenia, ending with the dedication of a beautiful new church and community center in Gyumri, celebrated the vision of the AMAA's founders and succession of leaders. In its second century, the AMAA is clearly dedicated to the Homeland of Armenia, which looks to the future with hope. The AMAA's faith, love, and service has produced excellent fruit that is nourishing the new generation. □

# Our AMAA Centennial/Armenia Homeland Tour

By Elise Kalfayan



In this Centennial year, the AMAA offered a two-week Armenia tour for its members. I and 35 others signed up, and our tour joined in the AMAA Centennial celebrations during the final week, September 23-30.

Armenia's history, the AMAA's legacy, and ongoing mission needs were all apparent to us as we experienced the tour and the celebrations.

## Tsitsernakaberd, Our First Official Stop

The first day, Thursday, September 20, we walked solemnly to the Armenian Genocide Memorial at Tsitsernakaberd and laid flowers around the Eternal Flame. The group gathered, and Martin Eskijian prayed in English, then we all recited the Hayr Mer. We visited the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute next to the Memo-

rial, then several of us walked to see the statue of "Mother Arising from the Ashes" which is a full-size copy of a statue at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum (Los Angeles, CA) commissioned and installed by the Luther Eskijian and Stephen Nazarian families.



## A Special Holiday Spent at Avedisian School



We visited the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School on September 21, Armenian Independence Day, and missed seeing the students as it was a holiday. Economics teacher Knarik Vardanyan showed us her video, taken the day before, of the students' assembly marking the event with singing, recitations, and red, orange and blue balloons.

A large wall plaque honoring the School's benefactors and sponsors was at the entrance. Three of them, Anahid Terjimanian, and Martin and Effie Eskijian, were on our tour.

Principal Melanya Geghamyan welcomed our group for a tour of the School's new, LEED-certified facilities; she led half our group and Vardanyan led the other half.

The School was built to exacting design and sustainability standards under the direction of architect Ron Altoon. Monitored energy use, solar panels, green roofs, and other touches are some of the design features. Shown the high-tech screen visible in the entry hall, we learned that the School gets 30% of its energy from the solar panels. In a common hallway, we saw large posters featuring prominent Armenian Evangelical leaders, historical sites, publications and a large AMAA Centennial banner. One room was filled with chess boards, others with state-of-the art computers, chemistry equipment, and art projects. The bright library had floor to ceiling windows looking out to the athletic field and solar panels.

Students pay no tuition at this private, AMAA-owned and operated School for grades K-12. School slots are in high demand and are only offered to local neighborhood residents. The neediest students are admitted first. The School gives priority to orphans, children with working parents, and refugees. More than ten percent of the current attendees are Syrian-Armenian refugees. Most students go on to local universities, many to AUA.

The AMAA provides operations funding for the School each year, and last year sponsors provided \$30,000 for additional programs. Additional funds are always needed for extracurricular and after school programs!

AMAA Board member Ken Kevorkian, who was on our tour, was so pleased to return to the site he visited with AMAA leaders in 2011 when they decided to buy the land. Just three years later, in 2014, the buildings opened and a short time after that the high school was opened, extending the education to 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

This was one of the most beautiful and welcoming schools I have ever seen anywhere. How heartwarming to know that local children growing up in very difficult circumstances can attend this free, private institution, built with love by benefactors and the AMAA.

## Sevanavank and Our Grateful Fellowship



"God has blessed us by allowing us to come here together. We can carry back news of God's work here, and what the AMAA is doing. Let's give thanks each time we get together!" So said tour member Marlen Kumjian, of Immanuel Armenian Congregational Church (Downey, CA) as we gathered for lunch after visiting Sevanavank. Our meal was served in a covered patio overlooking Lake Sevan. We had spent the morning hiking up the 200 steps to visit Sevanavank and take in its beautiful view, then traveling on to Dilijan to Goshavank.

She said a prayer of thanks, and we remembered it as brief rains during our bus rides cleared the sky for our two walks in and around the beautiful monasteries. During the rest of the trip we continued giving thanks for the good work AMAA has done and is doing.

## Morning Worship, Evening Concert

The first Sunday of our tour, September 23, we attended church in Yerevan. The Armenian Evangelical Church of Armenia and Artsakh had organized this special worship service to commemorate the AMAA's Centennial. Rev. Hovhannes Hovsepyan offered a prayer of thanks to God for the work of the AMAA in Armenia and with Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian presented a gift to the organization: a beautiful large wooden khatchkar.

Rev. Melkonian spoke of mission and worship in his sermon that followed. Drawing on Matthew 5:13-16, he emphasized that where there is no worship, mission is needed, and when all are worshipping the mission is accomplished. "Jesus Christ brings light into our lives, and true worship with it. We are called to take that worship to where it does not exist."

We returned to the church that evening for the first official Centennial event, a concert. We and other guests were impressed by the performers' love for the Homeland and for the AMAA expressed in recitations (in Armenian and English) as well as the musical numbers.

## Haghpat and Sanahin Monasteries - A 100-Mile, 4-Hour Drive

Most of Monday, September 24 was spent traveling by bus to and from two monasteries in the far north of Armenia, in a setting similar to the Swiss Alps. The ancient Haghpat and Sanahin (even older!) monasteries are remote, at high elevations accessible only by a long series of hairpin turns. They would be overrun tourist destinations if they were easier to get to! During the drive, our tour guide described the regions we were passing through and their histories. The map we had showing AMAA





missions and projects in the far north as well as throughout Armenia was becoming more impressive as we experienced road trips in its countryside, valleys, and mountains.

## Etchmiadzin, Sardarabad, and “The Angel of Salvation”

We were immersed in the centuries-long saga of Armenian spiritual and national survival on Tuesday, September 25, visiting Etchmiadzin, Sardarabad, and in the evening attending production of the play “The Angel of Salvation.”

On the way to Etchmiadzin, our guide gave us some background, telling us it was the first large Christian cathedral and the model for the entire region as well as Europe as ancient churches were built. She also told us of the 1918 Catholicos’s refusal to retreat as Turkish forces were advancing to crush Armenia – he said that he would fight to defend the church himself and ordered church bells to be rung for six days to call all Armenians to battle.

On the way to St. Gayane Cathedral, tour member Anahid Terjimanian told us the history made famous by Armenian author Raffi of two lovers buried on opposite sides of the church.

The Ethnographic Museum, which won a top Soviet-era architecture award, and the Sardarabad monument with its bell tower and winged lions, were our next stop. In the Museum’s main hall, we heard about Armenian soldiers, priests, civilians, and children whose heroic actions preserved Armenia as a nation.

It was a day to remember heroes. In 1916, Rev. Hovhannes Eskijian died while running an operation that saved many Armenian children and leaders being moved by the Turks through Aleppo to the Syrian desert. His efforts were documented in the book, *At the Crossroads of Der Zor*, and passed down by his surviving wife and son Luther. Playwright/Director Nune Abrahamyan transformed this history into “*The Angel of Salvation*.”

We joined a full house to see the moving play and stayed along with the entire audience for a series of heartfelt speeches afterward. Many of us stayed out late, continuing to dwell on what Rev. Eskijian and other heroes of faith and of the nation went through.

## Illumination, Artistic Heritage, and Armenian Evangelicals’ Art

Many tour members went to see Khor Virap and Noravank monasteries on Wednesday, September 26. Mary Demirjian (First Armenian Church, Belmont, MA) recalled history lessons from her school days in Aleppo of St. Gregory the Illuminator’s establishment of Christianity in Armenia. The group went on to Noravank, which contains splendid 14<sup>th</sup> century Armenian Christian decorative art.

In Yerevan that afternoon, other tour members and AMAA supporters were on hand for the elegant opening of a contemporary art exhibit featuring works of Armenian Evangelical artists.

## Erebouni’s Ancient Past, the Shogh Center’s Bright Present

On Thursday, September 27, our tour took us to the Erebouni Museum and Archeological Preserve. On the exterior was the emblem celebrating Yerevan’s 2,800<sup>th</sup> year. Inside was an impressive and still growing collection of artifacts from the area, expertly described by a museum guide. In the center of a simulated ancient courtyard was a large stone engraved with ancient cuneiform, with one side etched over much later in time as a khatchkar! We stayed to listen to a quartet sing for us and hiked up to the Erebouni Fortress ruins that have a panoramic view of the city.

Later in the day, a small group of us visited the Shogh Day Center in Yerevan, the first such program the AMAA established and the model for several others the AMAA has in Armenia, including the new one in Gyumri. Located in a dense, lower-income section of Yerevan and surrounded by unattractive apartment complexes, the older building has been thoroughly brightened up and has a welcoming atmosphere. AMAA Armenia Representative Harout Nercessian told us that the municipality gave it to the AMAA for use as a day care facility.

He introduced Center Director Naira Keropyan, who told us the program operates for grades 1-8 but even high school students continue to attend, and some former students are now volunteers. Children here are from disadvantaged backgrounds, often with both parents working long hours, sometimes from abusive situations. The police refer difficult cases to this Center because of its commitment and its individual attention to each child and their family. Professional social workers design projects and activities to help children learn and to provide an oasis of peace and love that fosters motivation. This successful program is the model for five other Shogh Day Centers that AMAA is running in Armenia and Artsakh, including the new one in Gyumri.

AMAA child sponsorships support these children, although actual costs are well above the set contributions. Mr. Nercessian told us there is a long waiting list, and the program currently serves 76 children while it was designed for just 60.

Ms. Keropyan spoke eloquently about the Center’s mission, its professional staff of believers who show God’s love and care to struggling families, and the positive impacts she’s seen. “We use the Christian model of social work. All workers are believers, and we pray to overcome fear. We consider spiritual resources as the most important,” she told us. “We don’t spare any effort, and we allow the families and children to evaluate our work,

so they can express how they feel. Our greatest encouragement comes from the children.”

We were privileged to be introduced to staff members and students, to see some work up close in an art class, to stand in a small dance studio where classes are led by a war hero, to read messages of hope dictated by the children and pinned to a wall, and to have some dialogue with one of the staff psychologists. As we left the Center, our hearts full, Director Keropyan and the children with her warmly waved goodbye.

## **Journey to Geghart and Garni, then “A Journey of Faith, Love and Service”**



On Friday, September 28, we drove to a vista of southern valleys, hills with Mt. Ararat barely visible in the background. On the way, our tour guide described the history and importance of the Geghart monastery to the Armenian church and to her personally (she was married there). We continued to the monastery, where we saw sacred music singers sing prayers in the cave. Then others could hear us as tour member Anahid Terjimanian led us in singing the Hayr Mer.

A fellowship lunch followed in Garni, where tour members shared family histories of suffering and survival. AMAA staff member Magda Poulos had arrived to help with the weekend events, and she joined us for the day. She answered tour members' questions about AMAA Armenia operations funding, as well as endowment and campaign needs.

We returned in time to prepare for an evening at the beautiful Yerevan Opera Theatre, joining a full house of guests for the AMAA Centennial cultural program.

## **1,500+ Years of the Armenian Alphabet, 100 Years of AMAA**

Saturday, September 29, we went on a short excursion to Artashayan where we saw the Armenian Alphabet monument built in

2005, the alphabet's 1,500<sup>th</sup> anniversary. As usual, our tour guide had interesting history to share, this time on the alphabet's creation and the split between Eastern and Western letter usage. Next, we saw a similar monument in Oshagan, near the burial shrine of Mesrob Mashtots. School children were mingling with us – they were on a field trip. It was wonderful to see them experiencing their heritage in a welcoming and climbable sculpture park where each letter incorporated historical etchings, and it reminded us of AMAA's commitment to the children of Armenia.

We headed back to prepare for the Gala Banquet, held at the Marriott in Republic Square, where our tour group was staying.

## **Gyumri**

The last stop on our official tour was to Gyumri, and another bus, plus cars and taxi vans, joined us on the long morning drive from Yerevan. We were so impressed by the large, well-built complex, the welcome we all received from staff and volunteers, the solemn service of dedication, and the fellowship that followed.

Joining the large AMAA delegation and many locals at a restaurant in the main square of Gyumri to celebrate the new center and church, this was the next to last of our group meals. The Gyumri gathering was the most memorable and moving, I concluded, during our sunset drive through the countryside back to Yerevan.

## **The Fruits of Faith, Love and Service**

In the latter part of its Centennial, the AMAA has built a compassionate presence with evangelistic, humanitarian and mission projects in the Homeland of Armenia. We spent a wonderful two weeks together experiencing Armenia and celebrating the AMAA's Centennial. Our tour included people from the First Armenian Church of Belmont, MA, Armenian Martyrs' Church of Havertown, PA, United Armenian Congregational Church of Los Angeles, CA, Immanuel Armenian Congregational Church of Downey, CA, and Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church of Pasadena, CA. We saw so much to be thankful for and to support while we were there.

AMAA Board member Ken Kevorkian had these thoughts: “On our AMAA trip to Armenia, I was overcome by excitement, awe, and emotion. I along with everyone else was so pleased and excited to see the Avedisian School and watch the children in action. I was in awe of the beauty and quality of design and construction of the Gyumri Center and Sanctuary. As we toured the Shogh Center, I had a difficult time keeping my emotions in check. I have gained great respect for the teachers and was overwhelmed by the special needs of the children.”

Don and Diane Uber of the Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church, Havertown, PA, took the tour with us and have contributed to many AMAA efforts over the years. “This was our first trip to Armenia, and it was great to see the many great projects the AMAA has invested in to improve Armenia's future. They are a wonderful complement to the optimistic feeling in the Armenia air after the recent elections. The trip has encouraged us to continue and perhaps increase our contributions to AMAA efforts.”

Debbie Fermanian, one of several tour members from the large Immanuel Armenian Congregational Church contingent, said that they all had a very memorable experience in Armenia.

Armenia at this time is looking to the future with great hope, and the AMAA's legacy of faith, love, and service has produced excellent fruit that is nourishing the new generation. □



# Memorable All-Armenian Evangelical Youth Conference Held in Armenia



During the summer of 2018, Armenia was the gathering place for nearly 150 youth and leaders from Armenian Evangelical churches and Unions from all over the world, as the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) celebrated the Centennial of its founding with an All-Armenian Evangelical Youth Conference. Armenian youth from 15 different countries from North and South America, Europe, the Middle East, Australia and Artsakh participated in the Conference.

The youth gathered in the Homeland, some for the first time, to experience a connection with one another, with their culture and heritage, and with their identity as young Armenian Christians. They visited some of the significant touristic sights in and around Yerevan and became acquainted with the educational and benevolent work of the AMAA in Armenia. The youth split into different groups and immersed themselves in various hands-on projects in communities around Armenia.

On Wednesday, August 15, RA Minister of Diaspora Mkhitar Hayrapetyan participated in the Conference's closing ceremony at AMAA's Camp Sheen-Shoghig in Hankavan. Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian, in his closing message, directed the youth to 1 Timothy 6:11 as a concrete plan against which they can evaluate their growth as young Armenian Christians.

A youth talent show revealed the amazing gifts these young people have, whether in instrumental music, singing, Armenian and modern dance, drama, or comedy. Wrapping up the evening was a word of thanks to the members of the organizing and planning committees and to the leaders who stepped in to help during the two weeks.

The relationships which began at the Conference will now become worldwide networked connections. We pray that these new networks will help sustain the vitality of the Armenian Evangelical Church in every place and well into the future. □





# 100 YEARS OF SERVICE

## The Armenian Missionary Association of America A Legacy of Faith, Love and Service

By Rev. John Khanjian, Ph.D.

### Part IV Education

**T**he Armenian Evangelical Community has always valued the importance of education; in fact the Armenian Evangelical churches have been pioneers in establishing quality schools. As it was mentioned earlier, in the “old country” most churches had a school attached to them to promote the light of the Gospel and knowledge. After the Genocide, the love of learning continued to inspire our people. Rev. Chopourian correctly observes, “For displaced people, the most important and permanent capital is education.”<sup>12</sup> Hence, the survivors of the Genocide who took refuge in the shanty camps of Aleppo, Beirut, Anjar, etc. were helped by the AMAA and others to establish schools where children sat on the floors of large wooden huts. In Aleppo’s Bethel School, like some in Lebanon, the classrooms were partitioned by canvas and for the morning and evening worship-hour the canvases were drawn to one side to create an assembly hall effect. As I recall, the Aleppo Evangelical community had more schools than any other Armenian entity; for example, marginal areas like Sheikh Maksoud and Dawoudieh had Evangelical elementary schools. Some of these schools provided a hot lunch for the neediest students. As time went on classes were added and secondary schools emerged and even a college was established in Beirut, Lebanon. These schools, which were open to all Armenian students, regardless of denominational belonging or political affiliation, produced thousands of well-educated and enlightened graduates who went on to make a good living or continue their education and become professionals and good citizens.

On July 7, 1996, at the Jubilee Celebrations of the 150th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church held in Yerevan, the Catholicos of All Armenians, His Holiness, Karekin I, acknowledged the significance of the Armenian Evangelical contribution to education by acknowledging this fact: We note their unforgettable and greatly appreciated work...in the area of education. I know to what I am referring to, because many schools were opened and the light of knowledge greatly spread among our people through the direct activity of the Armenian Evangelical Church. Also, they have done great work throughout their 150-year history in caring for our people’s social needs... a job well done!<sup>13</sup>

The AMAA played a very significant role by finding resources to purchase properties and build schools, providing scholarships, and meeting urgent needs created by the political storms, that passed over the Middle East. Currently over 1,000 students receive financial aid and 150 college students have tuition assistance. The current status of the schools is presented by each country or state.

**Armenia** has been the recent focus of the AMAA where a large educational complex with a very modern structure was built. The Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School and Community Center, located in Yerevan, has the capacity to educate 500 students.

**Greece** has the Armenian Evangelical Kindergarten of Kokkinia, located on the Church grounds.

**Iran** has supported for a long time Gohar Mesrobian School which continues to this day.

**Artsakh**, which has a growing young population, has four kindergartens: Hagop and Lydia Baghdigian KG in Stepanakert established in 2001, Hagop Garabed Bilezikian KG in Shushi established in 2001, Askeran KG established in 2003 and Rev. Dr. Movses B. Janbazian KG in Martakert established in 2003.

**Lebanon** is rich with its educational institutions most of which were negatively impacted by the 16-year-long Civil War. After 1995 the rebuilding and reorganizing began with the AMAA providing the needed resources and leadership; the country and the Evangelical community were impoverished and demoralized. Haigazian College was established on October 17, 1955 with the sum of \$25,000 pledged



*Armenian Evangelical  
Secondary School in  
Anjar, Lebanon.*



*The first graduating class of Haigazian College with Dr. John Markarian, President of the College, and his daughter (standing in the front).*

by Steven and Mary Mehagian in memory of Mary's father Dr. Armenag Haigazian, President of the Jenanian School in Konya. Others like Florence Gertmenian Mehagian and Stephen Philibosian also contributed to the original fund to establish the College.

Rev. Dr. John Markarian became the Founding President and began the hard work of building an institution of higher learning with 43 students and scarce resources but a lot of faith and enthusiasm. During his tenure the College was accredited by the Lebanese Ministry of Education as a four year institution of higher learning. Dr. Gilbert Bilezikian (1967-1971) served for three years between Dr. Markarian's two terms. From June 1982 to February 1985, Dr. Verne H. Fletcher was appointed as President.

The Civil War forced the College to abandon its campus and to relocate in the Eastern part of Beirut near the Armenian Community. From February 1985 the College was led by Dean Wilma Cholakian, with the assistance of some faculty, courageously maintained the Institution through trying war times. In August 1995, Rev. Dr. John Khanjian was elected as President. He served till August 31, 2002. During his tenure the old campus was renovated, refurbished, and the institution moved back to its campus in West Beirut.

In 1997 the College was accredited by the Lebanese government as a University with four faculties. The academic programs were updated, policies and procedures were introduced, a solid foundation was laid for further development, and the number of the students and majors increased. As of September 1, 2002, Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, a well-known and highly respected theologian, became the President.

To date the institution has produced 3,860 BA graduates in 28 majors and 178 graduates from the 11 MA programs. Recently, the University established the Armenian Diaspora Research Center, which has been prolific in the number of international conferences which it holds, and publications printed by the Haigazian Press. The institution continues to flourish under the wise and able leadership of Dr. Haidostian.

The Near East School of Theology is another institution of higher learning, which prepares, in cooperation with Haigazian University, pastors and Christian educators for the reformed Churches in the Near East and worldwide. The AMAA is a partner with other Mission and Church bodies in supporting this institution which is the continuation of our three Seminaries in Asia Minor, and was founded in 1932.

In addition to the above, the Evangelical Community of Lebanon boasts of four secondary schools, which have K-12 grades and one

Middle School. All these schools depend on the AMAA's Child Support programs and alumni donations; the populace has not recovered from the effects of the war which is compounded by the high cost of living. Although the schools do not enjoy the large number of students, which they used to have prior to the war, they have maintained their quality of education and their spiritual and moral orientation and have a good track record in passing government exams.

**Syria** continues to be a very tragic story where the recent war has decimated the population by death, displacement and immigration. Aleppo, which used to have five Evangelical schools, is down to Bethel High School (K-12) which continues to serve the community very well in spite of the hard times. The struggle to survive and thrive continues daily and under the shadow of impending death. Aleppo College is another important institution which also is a direct descendant of evangelical high schools in Turkey. Although it used to be managed by Mission and church bodies, the Armenian Evangelical Union of Syria and Lebanon had a 51% share in the property. The school was recently partitioned between the Synod of Syria and Lebanon and the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, which received the Girls school, including half of the property on which is located the Emmanuel Elementary School. After the independence of Armenia in 1991, the President's residence has become the formal Consulate general of Armenia. There is also the Syriac Evangelical School still functioning. According to reports not many Armenians are left in Aleppo. Damascus still has one elementary school. Kessab has an elementary school, which was damaged but has been fixed and teaching has resumed.

**Turkey** has the Hrant Dink School, established in 2003, located at the Gedik Pasha Church property.

**United States of America:** The Armenian Evangelical community dreamt for a long time of having Armenian Evangelical Schools in the United States. Early in the 1980s the opportunity came when sisters Charlotte and Elise Merdinian of Los Angeles, made a generous donation for that purpose. Consequently, the School was founded in 1982 in Sherman Oaks, California. The C & E Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School is Pre-school through 8th grade. It is WASC accredited and enjoys a high reputation as an institution of quality education.

Each Armenian Evangelical Church has a Sunday school program, which provides religious education, in addition to the religion classes that students take in their schools and the chapel services they have to attend.

## Youth Programs

The AMAA has always considered the Youth Programs, affiliated with the churches as important for the health and existence of



*Children's Camp in Armenia, early 1990s.*



the churches and communities. These programs are multifaceted; they include Sunday schools, junior high and high school groups, Christian Endeavor groups, youth organizations, Daily Vacation Bible Schools, and Church camps, used by all ages.

The youth ministries with their various names have been the fertile ground where the future ministers have been nurtured and the commitments made for full-time service. The health of a church depends on the spiritual experience and nurture of its members. This nurture starts early at the Sunday school, youth group, Bible study class, day school, and summer camps.

The summer camps play a very vital role in enriching the spiritual experience and providing a place for retreats and seminars. Large church unions have run their own camps. The Union of the Evangelical Churches of Armenia has a very large camp, Camp SHOGHIG in Hankavan region. Artsakh enjoys the Bedrosian Camp in Shushi; both of these camps have staff that plan year round for the summer events, which host thousands of children, youth and adults. The churches in Bulgaria rent camps for their summer camping activities. The Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of France has two camps: La Fontanelle and La Source. The Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East also has two camps called KCHAG, one is located near Beirut, Lebanon and the other camp is in Kessab, Syria. The KCHAG Camp of Lebanon, which was in ruins due to the civil war, is renovated and upgraded, and back in operation, thanks to the friends of KCHAG and the AMAA. However, the KCHAG Camp in Kessab, Syria which was in shambles is being repaired and some activities have resumed. In Turkey, the Gedik Pasha Church had Camp ARMEN in Tuzla, which was lately returned to its legal owner, the Gedik Pasha church. In the words of Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian, "The AMAA reaffirms the continuation of its full-fledged support of the camp and will work with the Gedik Pasha Church to advance the mission of Camp ARMEN."<sup>14</sup>

The Armenian Evangelical Union of North America runs two camps one on the East coast, Camp AREVELK (a rented facility) and another on the West coast, Camp AREV, which is a large and well-developed facility that serves not only the youth but also many churches, almost year round. The Armenian Evangelical Churches of Belgium and Bulgaria also run summer camps in rented facilities with the help of the AMAA.

## Humanitarian and Relief Aid

Relief work has been the hallmark of the AMAA from its inception to the present; and its work is not confined to the Armenian communities but often encompasses other nationalities where humanitarian aid is needed after major catastrophes. Compassion knows no limits. For the Armenian community, services for the sick, the elderly, the orphan, the widowed, the poor, the handicapped and the displaced are carried on by local churches or social organizations and the AMAA provides the needed finances or resources. For example the Association sends relief to families and the elderly in Armenia, Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, France, Georgia, Lebanon, Syria, and Uruguay. Some countries, because of their geopolitical situation, have extensive needs such as Armenia, Artsakh, Lebanon, and Syria.

**Armenia:** The Association has a sponsorship program for 1,600 children and families and another one for the elderly; supports the Aynilian Health Care Center in Yerevan; a Dental Clinic

*Volunteers at the AMAA's Forest Ave., Paramus Headquarters, preparing medication shipment to Armenia, early 1990s.*



in Vanadzor and Yerevan; a Summer Camp in Hankavan for over 1,600 children who receive physical and spiritual nourishment; milk formula distribution to over 500 infants and families; and Christmas gifts to over 9,000 children. Also support is provided to "Shogh" Community-based Educational Day Centers, nurseries, children's hospitals, the families of martyred soldiers and recently help is offered to Syrian-Armenian refugees who have been relocated in Armenia with the assistance of the AMAA. The Armenia Medical Mission Team, headed by Dr. Albert Phillips, has been rendering invaluable medical services to the villagers of the Lori region in the cities of Stepanavan and Vanadzor, to which the Sissian region was added, as well as Yerevan. The team which consists of physicians, nurses, healthcare professionals and volunteers annually provides for one week free medical help to hundreds of people.

**Artsakh** receives relief for 200 orphans, needy children, and milk formula for newborn babies who cannot be breastfed. The Summer Camp in Shushi provides nourishment and rest for many children. The Association sends Christmas gifts to children and runs "Shogh" Community-based Educational Day Centers in Askeran and Shushi. Also help is provided to the families of martyred soldiers.

**Lebanon**, whose civil war ended some time ago, continues to be in need of assistance. The AMAA through the Armenian Evangelical Social Service Center, Centers for the Armenian Handicapped in Lebanon, and the Home for the Elderly continues its support unabated. The huge numbers of refugees from Syria have been added to the list of people in need and of special consideration.

**Syria** with its ongoing catastrophic war is a humanitarian disaster; it is unable to sustain the wellbeing of its citizens; hence, the Armenian community is dependent for its very existence on outside help. Here also the AMAA is heavily involved in fundraising and helping to sustain the elementary and secondary schools and offers financial aid to the five churches. The AMAA also provides relief provisions to the retired teachers, the Association for the Armenian Blind, the old age home, the medical and dental clinics, subsidizes the salaries of the pastors and the teachers, and distributes sustenance assistance to the suffering Syrian-Armenians. In Syria and Lebanon 1,200 children are sponsored by the AMAA.

It is noteworthy to acknowledge the pioneering and outstanding humanitarian service, which the Armenian Evangelical Social Services Center rendered to the Armenian refugees, who came to Los Angeles in the early 1970s. The AMAA encouraged the idea of establishing such a center in Hollywood, and contributed not only to some of the expenses of the first year, but also continued to support it for many years. The Center, which was established in 1977, offered a full range of social services such as counseling in the areas of immigration, employment, and education; it taught

classes in English as a Second Language and Acculturation. The Center ended its services on March 31, 2012.

A statement in the brochure of the Centennial Campaign concisely presents the AMAA's endeavors:

*For almost one hundred years the Armenian Missionary Association of America has served the Lord by putting faith into action for our brothers and sisters in need. We have built churches, schools, and camps, provided life-giving medical care, created educational opportunities, met the needs of those in want and done much more. Upon this legacy of faith, love, and service, we embrace a future filled with opportunities to do even more, a second century of serving the Lord by serving others.<sup>15</sup>*

Indeed the need is great; the challenge to keep the balance between the four demanding areas of Evangelism, Education, Youth Programs and Humanitarian Relief is daunting and requires experienced, knowledgeable, and responsible leadership from the AMAA; our faith in God and the Armenian people is also great. Every mission has a vision behind it and the AMAA's vision has



## FOOTNOTE

12. Chopourian, op. cit. p.6

13. Ibid. p.6

14. AMAA News, Oct.-Dec. 2015

15. The Centennial Campaign, AMAA, p.1

Rev. John Khanjian, Ph.D. is the past President of Haigazian University in Beirut, Lebanon.

\* The author is grateful to Louisa Janbazian for reviewing, proofreading and filling the lacuna in his information.

been and continues to be to spread the light of the Gospel and of benevolence and good will to all. As it was mentioned, compassion knows no boundaries. Jesus commands us to not only be the light of the world but also to "be merciful just as your Father is merciful." Luke 6:36.

*The End*

## AMAA Holds 99<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Elects New Board Members for Class of 2021

The 99th Annual Meeting of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) was held at the United Armenian Congregational Church of Los Angeles, CA on Saturday, October 20, 2018. AMAA President Nazareth Darakjian, M.D. presided over the meeting. Rev. Haroutune Selimian, President of the Armenian Protestant Community of Syria offered a prayer and a short devotion based on Jeremiah 29:11: "For this, we are called to embody this Word of God: 'I know the plans that I have for you', declares the Lord. 'They are plans for peace and not disaster, plans to give you a future filled with hope'." Reflecting on people's pressures, problems and pain, he said hope liberates people from hopelessness and gives them direction and purpose for life. "We simply cooperate with God," he said, "for He has plans for us."

During the meeting AMAA Officers, Directors and Committee Chairs, as well as delegates of the Armenian Evangelical Unions, the Armenian Evangelical World Council and affiliated organizations shared their joys and concerns and praised God for another successful year.

The general membership of the AMAA elected the following nine members to the Board of Directors Class of 2021 for a term of three years: Bryan Agbabian, Bryan Bedrosian, Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian, John Cherkezian, Mark Kassabian, Esq., Louis Kurkjian, Heather Ohaneson, Ph.D., Michele Simourian and Ken Kevorkian.

In conjunction with the AMAA Annual Meeting, the Armenian Evangelical World Council held its meeting on October 18 and 19.

On Sunday, October 21, members and guests joined the United Armenian Congregational Church of Los Angeles for a special Worship Service. Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, President of Haigazian University, preached in English and Rev. Hovhannes Hovsepyan, Pastor of the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Yerevan, preached in Armenian. A special prayer was offered in memory of AMAA members and friends who made the transition from this life to Life



Eternal during the past year. Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian officiated at the installation of the newly elected members of the Board of Directors

We take this opportunity to thank the members of the United Armenian Congregational Church and their pastors for hosting the Annual Meeting and for welcoming us with great warmth, hospitality, delicious meals and enthusiasm. We pray that God will continue to abundantly bless this congregation and their ministry. □



# CENTENNIAL CAPITAL CAMPAIGN



Lucine Mnatsakanyan

## Avedisian School

The award-winning Khoren and Shooshanig School and Community Center in Armenia is a testament to the AMAA's one-hundred year commitment in education. Safe, respectful environment. Individual attention. State-of-the art facilities. A modern school. These are just a few of the many reasons why students at the Avedisian School are motivated to excel and reach their fullest potential.

Supporting this institution is our way of supporting the future of people in Armenia, its future leaders, for years to come. Education is an investment in the future. Join us in supporting this outstanding School with a gift that will have a lasting effect.

Below are testimonies of two bright and motivated Avedisian School students.



## Learning for Life... the

**Lucine Mnatsakanyan.** "Success is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure." This quote has led me since September 2014. This remains a significant date for me because it is the very first time that I entered a school which has changed my life –the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School. During my three years of studies at the Avedisian School, I learned values and principles, which became the foundation for my success.

Right after finishing high school, I gained admittance to the American University of Armenia (AUA). Some months later, at the age of 17, I got my first job and earned my first salary, working at my dream job. During the summer of 2018, I was selected by the US Embassy Yerevan to represent Armenia in the United States of America at different international seminars and conferences. In addition to this experience, I continue volunteering and helping people in need. Along with all of my activities, I have an excellent academic standing at AUA.

For my future, I am planning to continue my education and work for the interest of my country.

**Mane Karapetyan.** It has always been my desire to pursue higher education and attend University. When I heard about the American University of Armenia (AUA), I began my research to learn about the admission requirements. I was able to learn that the students who attend are well-educated, required entrance exam scores, voluntarism, etc. The Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School inspires me to study and prepare so that I will be able to attend the University of my dreams.

# IGN

ARMENIAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

## School

Shooshanig Avedisian  
a is a shining example  
ment to its mission  
Small class sizes.  
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## Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School

Avedisian School provides its students with many benefits and privileges that other schools do not offer. We are fortunate to have some of the best teachers of the country teach at Avedisian School. The School is not a big one and everyone knows each other. We have friendly staff and teachers, an amazing library, a variety of Clubs and an incredible Principal (Mrs. Melanya Geghamyan) who is one of the best people I know.

I have been a student at the Avedisian School for almost three years, and I can say for sure that people here are friendlier than in my previous School. That is what makes this School so beneficial and special for me. The fact is, Avedisian School is not only giving me the education I need to enter the University, but also involved me in an amazing community of volunteers that help poor families.

Avedisian School is an educational center with lots of opportunities and I love the School, the teachers and the Principal. I praise God for giving me the opportunity to be in the best school that has prepared me to enter the University of my dream."

**Through the kindness and generosity of our donors, the AMAA will continue this most important ministry for Armenia's new generation.**

Mane Karapetyan







## AEWC 2018 Biennial Meeting in Los Angeles

By Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, AEWK Executive Director

**T**he Biennial Meeting of the Armenian Evangelical World Council (AEWC) was held in Los Angeles, CA on October 18-19, 2018. Representatives of the five Church Unions and two missionary organizations of the AEWK, as well as some out of country guests, were in attendance.

Before the business meeting, Rev. Berdj Djambazian conducted a brief devotional service. Also, a brief period of remembrance was led by Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, in memory of the seven Armenian Evangelical ministers who made their transition from this world to their eternal home during the years 2017-2018.

Both written and oral reports were given by the AEWK President Rev. Berdj Djambazian, Executive Director Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian and Treasurer Dr. Nurhan Helvacian. Furthermore, brief oral reports were presented by the seven-member organizations.

The following items were duly discussed and acted upon:

- 1. Mode of Electing AEWK's Officers.** Traditionally, elections of the AEWK officers were made from the three founding church Unions. It was resolved that henceforth the elections be conducted according to the bylaws, namely, including all member church Unions.
- 2. Dialogue between the Holy See of Etchmiadzin and AEWK.** Although the relationship between the Holy See and AEWK has been cordial, there was no official dialogue during the year 2017-18. The Council expressed its readiness to resume the dialogue when the Holy See is ready to do so.
- 3. Evaluation of the AMAA Centennial Anniversary Celebrations.** The Council registered its appreciation for the impact of the AMAA's Centennial celebrations worldwide.
- 4. Vacancy of Armenian Evangelical Pulpits.** Although the Council could not come up with any short-range solution to the crisis created by the shortage of ministers, it maintained that the long-range solution of this crisis lies primarily in the revitalization and rededication of our churches and youth ministries from which will emerge new candidates for ministry.
- 5. Feasibility of a United Armenian Evangelical Authority.** A special committee was assigned in 2017 to study this matter. The committee had no report on this subject. The Council urged the committee members to pursue their task and present a report by the next executive committee meeting in October 2019.
- 6. Representation at the Annual Conventions of Sister Unions.** The Council discussed the proposal that each Union send a representative to its sister Union's annual convention. It decided that the implementation of the proposal is up to each church Union.
- 7. Evaluation of the 2018 All Armenian Evangelical Youth Conference.** A comprehensive evaluation was made of the All-Armenian Evangelical Youth Conference, held in Armenia from August 2-16, 2018. The youth executives made 30 proposals to Armenian Evangelical churches for their study and deliberation.  
The Council resolved that each Union should instruct its churches to seriously study these proposals. It also decided that Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian prepare and mail an action plan to all churches inviting them to an All Armenian Evangelical Pastor's and Laymen's Conference, to be held in Armenia during the first week of August 2020.
- 8. The Status of AEWK Endowment Fund.** A proposal from the AMAA Treasurer addressed to the Council, that the AEWK Endowment Fund, which is in the AMAA custody, be converted from its custodial status to a "Specified Use Endowment Fund," subject to the following conditions and stipulations: the Endowment Fund may only be used for AEWK specified purposes; at no time the AEWK Endowment may be subject to any management fees, appropriations or any AMAA charges; the Endowment Fund may be withdrawn in part or in full by the AEWK at will.
- 9. Election of New Officers.** The following officers were elected for the year 2019-2020: Rev. Joel Mikaelian, President; Rev. Albert Paytyan, Vice President; Rev. Haroutune Selimian, Secretary; Dr. Nurhan Helvacian, Treasurer.
- 10. Closing Remarks.** The Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Tootikian, closed the meeting expressing his thanks to the outgoing officers of the Council and extending his congratulations to the newly elected officers. Furthermore, on behalf of the Council, he expressed his thanks to the host church, the United Armenian Congregational Church of Los Angeles.

The meeting was adjourned with Rev. Dr. Tootikian's prayer and Benediction.



**Front row L to R:** Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, Zaven Khanjian, Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, Rev. Berdj Djambazian, Rev. Joël Mikaélian, Joyce Philiposian Stein.

**Back row L to R:** Rev. Avetik Khachatryan (guest), Rev. Hovhannes Hovsepyan (guest), Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian, Rev. Haroutune Selimian, Rev. Dr. René Léonian, Rev. Gilbert Léonian, Rev. Albert Paytyan, Rev. Megerditch Karagoezian, Rev. Vatche Ekmekjian, Harout Nercessian (guest) and Rev. Dr. Krikor Youmshajekian (guest).

# MAN OF VISION WITH A MISSION

The Unveiling of Former AMAA Executive Director  
Rev. Dr. Movses B. Janbazian's Bust in Yerevan

*I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven.* Acts. 26. 29

*"In 301 AD, our forebears made a covenant with Jesus Christ. If we fulfill our commitment to that covenant, then God will abundantly bless our small but precious nation, and He will make our nation a source of blessings not only to its sons and daughters, but also to its neighboring peoples and to all humanity. We believe that this is our nation's reason for being; this is our people's mission in the world; and this is the God-ordained destiny of our Haigaznian (Armenian) race."*

**Rev. Dr. Movses B. Janbazian**

Sept. 22-23, 1999, Armenia Diaspora First Conference in Yerevan

**T**he grateful leadership of the Homeland formally recognized Rev. Dr. Movses B. Janbazian's godly activities in the preservation of the nation 13 years ago. For his devotion in inspiring the people of Armenia with strength and peace, moral treasury and purity, the No. 79 Middle School of Yerevan was named the "Movses Janbazian No. 79 Middle School" on the fifth anniversary of his passing on September 26, 2005.

On September 3, 2018 the unveiling of the bust of Rev. Dr. Janbazian, sculpted by Rev. Janbazian's brother Hagop Janbazian, took place at the Movses Janbazian No. 79 Middle School of Yerevan.

The ceremony was attended by Rev. Janbazian's wife Louisa Janbazian, son Vahak Janbazian, brother Hagop Janbazian, sister Ani Janbazian Hasserjian, Armenia Representative of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) Harout Nercessian, President of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in Eurasia Rev. Dr. René Léonian, Senior Pastor of the Evangelical Church of Armenia Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian, Deputy Mayor of Yerevan Aram Sukyasyan, Head of General Education Department Anna Stepanyan, Former Prelate of the Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of Canada, Arch. Khajag Hagopian, employees of the AMAA and Armenian Evangelical Churches of Armenia, teachers, parents, and children,

and guests from different schools and organizations.

The celebration began with the anthems of the Republic of Armenia and the Movses Janbazian School. School Principal Knarik Hayrapetyan welcomed the guests. Special remarks were made by Rev. Dr. René Léonian, Hagop Janbazian, Aram Sukissyan, Louisa Janbazian, Arch. Khajag Hagopian and others. They spoke about Rev. Janbazian's life and activities highlighting his patriotic service through the AMAA in Armenia and Artsakh, and his great role in strengthening Armenia - Diaspora ties in education and other spheres.

Sculptor Hagop Janbazian said: "Soaked with national and spiritual ideas, with Rev. Janbazian's magnificent vision and efforts, the AMAA established its center in the newly independent Armenia, which for the past 27 years has continued its mission of extending a hand to the disadvantaged, the poor, the needy, the students, the children and to all mankind in the Homeland and Artsakh. Yes, Rev. Janbazian's life was a daily sacrifice for the people and for the Homeland that he worshipped. From Anjar to Beirut and Damascus, from Brazil to the United States of America, from Istanbul to Canada and to the Motherland and Artsakh, he acted unwaveringly, preached with faith tirelessly and unshakably, remaining steadfast, first to his own person and then to his surroundings. He was consumed slowly,





transforming his life into a pure and living example with a complete, devotional, nationalistic and spiritual moral fervor.”

Following the official unveiling of the bust, the school children gathered in the Auditorium and presented a special program dedicated to the life of Rev. Janbazian. The program concluded with a video presentation which highlighted Rev. Janbazian’s activities in Armenia and Artsakh.

With the passing of Rev. Janbazian in 2000, the Armenian people lost a great Armenian who faithfully served God and the people and invested his precious contribution into the treasury of the Lord and the nation, forgetting himself, and his own personal needs. He was one of those rare people who became a blessing to the nation that bore him.

It is impossible to list all the contributions Rev. Janbazian made with great devotion. He knew that he did not just work for his time, but also for the future. Rev. Janbazian understood that all the Armenians in the world would become one nation whose Homeland is Armenia, and these two are under one flag, the Armenian tricolor. □



**L to R:** Principal Knarik Hayrapetyan, Hagop Janbazian, Vahak Paul Janbazian, Arch. Khajag Hagopian, Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian, Rev. Dr. René Léonian, Rev. Hovhannes Hovsepyan, Harout Nercessian and Louisa Janbazian.

*(Translated and adapted from the Armenian version written by Andranik Mardoyan, Press Secretary of AMAA-Armenia)*

### **To the Editor, AMAA News:**

*First of all, I want to express my appreciation for the quality and regularity of the “AMAA News,” and how it has established a bilingual presence in print and online for Armenian Evangelicals in North America in this new century, particularly in the absence of any other such periodical.*

*I have been reading with interest the instructive historical survey, written by Rev. Dr. John Khanjian, about the first century of the AMAA’s existence, and have been awed by those titans who did their utmost to serve the needs of Armenians worldwide. It places a heavy responsibility on our shoulders to develop new visionary leaders for times such as this.*

*In the concluding paragraph of Part III (p. 18, July-Aug-Sept 2018 issue) the author gives the impression that in the face of all the pressures and difficulties being endured in the Middle East these days, churches and institutions have no strategic plan, but are allowing circumstances to draw them along toward an uncertain future. “Faith may be a valuable asset but so is rational planning” implies that a passive “faith” that things will get better is the Armenian Evangelical Union’s guiding principle here in the Near East.*

*The AMAA has been a strategic partner in the UAECNE’s work for a century, and its leadership in many cases consists of people who have emigrated to the US from the Middle East. It is certainly aware that the art of planning for the future is a challenge here, to say the least. One’s carefully prepared plan can be rendered irrelevant very quickly due to “events on the ground” or even due to the pronouncement of some nation’s leader half a world away; indeed that has been the case repeatedly, and continues so to this day. Those who have the advantage of doing strategic planning within a society that enjoys relatively greater stability may not fully appreciate what church leaders in the Middle East face on a daily basis.*

*As someone who, with my wife Maria, is being supported (in part) by the AMAA in our ministry here in Lebanon, I trust that this type of comment does not reflect an attitude of the AMAA as a whole. I and others here will continue to do our utmost to serve this community with that assurance, and with a well-grounded and rational faith in the Lord Jesus, knowing that the health of the entire Diaspora is inextricably linked to the strength and health of the Armenian community of the Near East.*

*Sincerely,*

**Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian**

*Coordinator of Church Relations,*

*Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East*

*Beirut, Lebanon*

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## Estate of the Late Diana A. Apoian Announces Three Major Bequests Benefitting the Armenian-American Community Including the AMAA

**T**he estate of the late Diana Alice Apoian, through its Executor Mark A. Momjian, Esq., has announced three major bequests of \$300,000 each to the Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church, Havertown, PA; the Armenian Sisters Academy, Radnor, PA; and the Armenian Missionary Association of America, Paramus, NJ.

A native Philadelphian and a first-generation daughter of Armenian immigrants, Diana Apoian was born January 27, 1937 at Lankenau Hospital. Her parents were born in Severeke (modern-day Siverek), located between Urfa and Diyarbakir in the southeastern section of the Ottoman Empire. Michael Apoian (1906-1998) and Elizabeth Saydalian Apoian (1910-1987) worshipped as members of the Armenian Evangelical Church, formed under the auspices of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. They emigrated to the United States in 1920, while the Armenian Genocide was still in progress. Married in Philadelphia in 1929, Mr. Apoian worked as a shoe repairer, and Mrs. Apoian worked as a seamstress and dressmaker. As a child growing up in Philadelphia, Ms. Apoian loved going to dances and enjoyed spending time with friends at the Elmwood Roller Skating Rink.

Ms. Apoian and her two siblings, the late Joseph Apoian, a Professor of Mathematics at Drexel University, and her surviving sister Anna Brantley, a retired bookkeeper, all graduated from John M. Patterson Elementary School, William T. Tilden Middle School, and John Bartram High School, where Ms. Apoian was a member of the Class of 1954 and an active participant in the Dance and Swim Clubs. After graduation, Ms. Apoian worked as a systems analyst for the Bell Telephone Company, where she was employed for many decades.

Ms. Apoian grew up attending the Armenian Evangelical Church, as well as the Southwestern Presbyterian Church, where she enjoyed Bible study and singing hymns. Later in life, Ms. Apoian loved attending Broadway musicals and going to Nashville and Branson to hear country music. She considered herself one of the country's biggest fans of singer-songwriter, Neil Diamond. Ms. Apoian was a devoted and beloved member of the Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church of Havertown. She passed away on March 15, 2018 and is buried in the historic Arlington Cemetery in Drexel Hill, PA. □



### *Meet Our Staff at AMAA*

#### **Christine Kutlu, AMAA Marketing and Events Manager**

**I**n September 2018, Christine Kutlu joined the Armenian Missionary Association of America as Marketing and Events Manager to help the AMAA capture a new community. Along with many other responsibilities, she will assist in driving change across the organization by developing programs to engage the youth within the AMAA. She is extremely honored and humbled to be working alongside individuals and churches involved with such a Godly mission.

Born in California and raised in New Jersey, Christine is a first-generation college graduate from Ramapo College of New Jersey where she majored in Business Administration concentrating in Marketing with a minor in Accounting. She has worked in different industries and volunteered her time to help build homes in Armenia with the Fuller Center Housing for Armenia, joined HypeLite, a non-profit to help children bridge the gap between passion and purpose, and was part of the Ad Book Committee and Armenian Olympics sporting event for the Armenian Youth Federation. Shortly after graduation, Christine started a pastry business called B. Baklava to honor her Grandparents' dedication to the Armenian culture and to honor her incredible Mother. It was during Easter when in a dream Christine saw Jesus Christ who delivered a message to her. Her mission then became clear that she was to Share the LAV through Armenian style pastries such as Baklava and Boregs. LAV symbolizes love, translates to good in Armenian, and is a play on words for BakLAVa. With revenue and products, she contributed to charities and donated time and pastries for fundraising events.

Through her volunteer work, business and work history, Christine gained much knowledge in all functions of marketing which helped her get her dream job at the AMAA. She will continue to Share the LAV by helping the AMAA prosper and fulfill its worldwide mission of maintaining a range of educational, evangelistic, relief, social service, church and child care ministries. Christine's view on life, of evolving to better herself and helping others, comes from her favorite Bible verse, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philipians 4:13





# The Merdinian School Women's Auxiliary Celebrates 20th Anniversary and Honors Suzie Phillips, a Founding Member

By Louisa Janbazian

On Saturday, November 3, 2018, the Verdugo Hall of Castaway Restaurant in Burbank, CA was filled with joy and great enthusiasm as friends and supporters of the C & E Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School gathered together for a Fall Luncheon to celebrate the School's Women's Auxiliary and its 20th Anniversary and to pay tribute to one of the founding members, Suzie Phillips.

After an Invocation offered by Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian, Interim Pastor of the United Armenian Congregational Church of Los Angeles, the School's dedicated and dynamic Principal Lina Arslanian, accompanied by three students, gave an update on the School's successes and achievements. Principal Arslanian commended the support and love of the members of the Women's Auxiliary to Merdinian School and expressed her "gratitude for an amazing celebration luncheon on this special anniversary and heartfelt congratulations to the honoree, Suzie Phillips, a founding member!" The three students then expressed their utmost pride to be at Merdinian, where they pursue excellence not only in academics, but in learning about their Armenian Christian heritage.

Following lunch, the Hamazkayin Niari Dance Group, under the direction of Catherine Hairabedian, entertained the guests with several authentic Armenian dances, which were received with much enthusiasm.

Dina Tilkian Phillips, the Auxiliary's first Chairperson, reflected on the formation and early days of the Auxiliary, when a group of dedicated women from the greater Los Angeles area came together as a support group to help the School both financially and morally. She then introduced honoree Suzie Phillips, who graciously hosted the first meeting of the newly formed Auxiliary group 20 years ago. Describing Mrs. Phillips, she said: "Most importantly, Suzie loves the Lord and has a heart of service and a spirit of generosity to help others, and this has been a shining example to all her family."

Ani Hanessian and Louisa Janbazian, current Co-Chairs of the Merdinian Auxiliary, invited Mrs. Phillips to the podium. As a token of appreciation, they presented her with a framed page from the 1998 Merdinian School Yearbook showing two group photos from the Auxiliary's first year and the following words, describing the formation of the Women's Auxiliary: *In May 1997, the Women's Auxiliary of the Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School was formed. The purpose of the Auxiliary is to support Armenian Evangelical Education, promote interest in the Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School, further the mission of the School and render financial support, in all cooperating with the Principal and the Board of Directors. The Auxiliary is an affiliate of the Armenian Missionary Association of America. The first meeting of the newly formed Women's Auxiliary was held at the home of Suzie Phillips in the presence of the late Rev. Dr. Movses B. Janbazian, Executive Director of the AMAA.*

Mrs. Phillips expressed her gratitude for this honor and said: "I feel, as members of the Auxiliary, we are helping the students to grow in some small way. From the Principal to the teachers to the visiting ministers, we are all planting that seed in each student's heart, so the children will grow and become leaders of their community. And the most important thing we are planting in each little heart, is the Word of God for it will stay with them forever."

With their love, dedication and effort, Mrs. Phillips and her husband George R. Phillips have been a blessing to the School since its formative days. They have indeed heeded God's word; "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10

Established in 1982, the C & E Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School is the only Armenian Evangelical School in the United States. The School offers a broad-based curriculum that fosters academic excellence, high moral values, and spiritual enrichment in the Armenian Evangelical tradition. The School strives to create a safe and nurturing environment where every student receives personal attention to become a successful and responsible individual. For more information you may contact Principal Arslanian at 818.907.8149. □



Honoree Suzie Phillips with her husband George R. Phillips, Esq.



Merdinian School Women's Auxiliary.

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# Armenian Missionary Association of Canada Celebrates the 172<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church

**M**embers of the congregations of four Armenian Evangelical Founding Member Churches of the Armenian Missionary Association of Canada met in Kingston, Ontario on Saturday, September 15 for a Day Retreat of fellowship and fun and to celebrate the 172<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church. The Armenian Evangelical Movement was established as a church in Istanbul, Turkey in 1846.

Buses left early in the morning on September 15 from Toronto and Montreal, bringing church members to Bay Park Baptist Church where the celebration was held.

The program began with a worship service, led by Raffi Shnorhokian and the worship team of the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal.

Mihran Jizmejian, President of the Association, welcomed the participants and introduced the program to more than 130 people who had come from the Armenian Evangelical Church of Cambridge, Ontario, the Armenian Evangelical Church of Toronto in Markham, Ontario, the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal, QC and the Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal in Laval, QC.

Rev. Hovhannes Svadjian, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal in Laval, QC, preached in Armenian, Rev. Shant Barsoumian, acting East Coast Youth Leader, gave the English sermon. We were very happy that this year there were quite a noticeable number of youth participating in the event.

Everyone posed for a group picture after the morning session which was followed by a lunch of Lahmajoun and Chee Keofte. As with the feeding of the five thousand, there were baskets of leftovers.

There was a two-hour free period for the participants. Many chose to go sightseeing in Kingston City on the buses, while the AMAC Board of Directors held its Business Meeting.

The youth had their session with Rev. Barsoumian in the afternoon. The closing session of the Retreat was a Communion Service led by Rev. Georges Dabbo, Pastor of the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal, QC, with assistance from the elders of the four churches.

A great thank you to the organizers of this event, and with thankful hearts we praise God for a blessed day. □



## Rev. Manjelian Named Pastor Emeritus of the Armenian Evangelical Church, Cranston, RI

With much love and affection, the Armenian Evangelical Church of Cranston, Rhode Island announces that Rev. Hagop Manjelian has been named Pastor Emeritus.

Rev. Manjelian came to the Rhode Island Church in 1998 and served the Church faithfully and steadfastly while attending Andover Newton Theological Seminary in Newton, MA. After almost 5 years of studying and pastoring the Church, Badveli was ordained and began his new life as an ordained Minister. Unfortunately, Badveli Hagop had a severe stroke, and began a new life of relentless rehabilitation. His struggle was a powerful witness to God's grace and Badveli's strong will to overcome the grim prognosis which the doctors gave him.

Rev. Manjelian has never given up, and has continued to serve the Lord, visiting members of the community with a message of God's grace and faithfulness, teaching the young people, representing the Armenian Evangelical Church in the community and preaching.

The Armenian Evangelical Church of Cranston is grateful to Badveli Hagop for his service as a leader in their Church, then and now, and for his powerful witness. His service will continue as he assists the current Pastor by visiting, preaching and representing the congregation in the community. □





## AMAA Sundays Celebrated in AEUNA Churches

During the month of October 2018, AMAA West Coast Executive Director Levon Filian and AMAA's Armenia Representative Harout Nercessian visited four churches within the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA) to celebrate AMAA Sunday.

Mr. Filian visited the Immanuel Armenian Congregational Church of Downey, CA on Sunday, October 14 and First Armenian Presbyterian Church of Fresno, CA on Sunday November 3. Mr. Nercessian visited the "Christian Outreach to Armenians" Church in Glendale, CA on Sunday October 21, and the Armenian Evangelical Church of Toronto, Ontario, Canada on Sunday October 28.

During their AMAA Sunday visits Mr. Filian and Mr. Nercessian preached from the pulpits the Word of God and made presentations about the AMAA's ministries around the world.

Our thanks to the pastors, councils and the congregations of the churches for their partnership and ongoing support and encouragement for the Mission and Outreach of the AMAA. □



AMAA West Coast Executive Director Levon Filian with some of the members of the Immanuel Armenian Congregational Church of Downey, CA.



AMAA West Coast Executive Director at the First Armenian Presbyterian Church of Fresno, CA



AMAA Armenia Representative Harout Nercessian at the Christian Outreach to Armenians Church in Glendale, CA.



AMAA Armenia Representative Harout Nercessian at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Toronto, ON, Canada.

## Մերտինեան Վարժարանի Հիւրերը

Հոկտեմբեր 15-ի Մերտինեան Հայ Աւետարանական Վարժարանի Մշակութային Օրուան Հանդիսութեան հիւրերն էին Հիւսիսային Ամերիկայի Արեւմտեան Թեմի առաջնորդ՝ Բարեշնորի Տէր Յովնան Արք. Տէրտէրեան, Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանական Ընկերակցութեան Գործադիր Տնօրէն՝ Զաւէն Խանճեան, եւ Փաստաւիճակի Հայ Կիլիկիա Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի Հովիւ՝ Վեր. Մերոբ Մկրտիչեան: Հիւրերը իրենց աղօթքով եւ խօսքերով մասնակից դարձան օրուան յայտագիրին: Պրն. Խանճեան իր խօսքին մէջ յիշեց դպրոցի բարերարներ՝ Ծարլոթ եւ Էլիզ Մերտինեանները, ինչպէս նաեւ Աւետարանականի բարենպաստ դերը ի նպաստ Մերտինեան Վարժարանին:

Հոկտեմբեր ամսուն Մերտինեան Վարժարան այցելեցին նաեւ Հայաստանէն, Աւստրալիայէն եւ Հալէպէն Հայ Աւետարանական Հովիւներ, որոնք Լոս Անճելոս կը գտնուէին Աւետարանականի Տարեկան Ժողովին առիթով, եւ մասնակցեցան Վարժարանի առաւօտեան Պաշտամունքին:



Աւետարանականի Գործադիր Տնօրէն Զաւէն Խանճեան (ձախէն երկրորդ), Յովնան Արք. Տէրտէրեան (կէտրոն), Վեր. Մերոբ Մկրտիչեան (աջէն երրորդ) եւ Տնօրէնուհի Լինա Արալանեան (աջէն երկրորդ) դպրոցի հոգաբարձութեան անդամներու հետ:



Հայաստանի հիւր հովիւները Մերտինեան Վարժարանին մէջ:



Վեր. Գրիգոր Եուշաճըզեան՝ Աւստրալիայէն (ձախէն երկրորդ) եւ Վեր. Յարութիւն Սէլիմեան՝ Հալէպէն (ձախէն երրորդ) Մերտինեան Վարժարանին մէջ:

## Պաշտօնակոչութեան Պաշտամունք Վեր Սերոբ Ճ. Մկրտիչեանի

Կիրակի, 21 Հոկտեմբեր 2018-ի յետմիջօրէի ժամը 5-ին, Հիւսիսային Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանական Միութեան հովանաւորութեամբ, Փասատինայի Հայ Կիլիկիա Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիին մէջ տեղի ունեցաւ Վեր. Սերոբ Ճ. Մկրտիչեանի Պաշտօնակոչութեան Պաշտամունքը, որպէս սոյն Եկեղեցիի Աւագ Հովիւ:

Պաշտամունքին ներկայ էին Համաշխարհային Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիներու Հոգեւոր Հովիւներ (Քսանէ աւելի), Քոյր Յարանուանութիւններու, Հայ եւ օտար կազմակերպութիւններու ներկայացուցիչներ եւ հոծ բազմութիւն մը որ լեցուցած էր Եկեղեցին եւ Եկեղեցիի կից Տէրեան սրահը:

Բոլոր ներկայ հովիւները իրենց բաժինը բերին Պաշտօնակոչութեան Պաշտամունքին պատգամով, յորդորներով, աղօթքով, Սուրբ Գիրքի ընթերցանութեամբ եւ շնորհաւորական ու ողջոյնի խօսքերով:

Պաշտամունքը վերջացաւ Եկեղեցւոյ Աւագ Հովիւ՝ Վեր. Սերոբ Մկրտիչեանի երախտագիտական խօսքով եւ Օրհնութեան Աղօթքով:

Պաշտամունքէն ետք, Եկեղեցւոյ Հէնրի եւ Անայիս



Տէրեան սրահէն ներս, տեղի ունեցաւ շնորհաւորութիւն եւ հիւրասիրութիւն:

Հայ Կիլիկիա Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին հիմնուած է 1922-ին եւ Փասատինայի առաջին Հայ Եկեղեցին է, որ Աստուծոյ շնորհքով կանգուն մնացած է 96 երկար տարիներէ ի վեր:

## Փասատինայի Հայ Կիլիկիա Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի 96-ամեայ Տարեդարձ եւ Բանաստեղծ Ժագ Յակոբեանի 101-ամեակ

Կիրակի, 27 Հոկտեմբեր 2018-ի երեկոյեան ժամը 7:00-ին, 200-է աւելի հիւրեր համախմբուած էին Փասատինայի Հայ Կիլիկիա Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի Հէնրի եւ Անայիս Տէրեան սրահէն ներս, տօնելու Եկեղեցիի 96-րդ տարեդարձը, միեւնոյն ժամանակ պատուելու Բանաստեղծ Ժագ Յակոբեանը, իր 101-րդ տարեդարձին առիթով:

Օրուան հանդիսավարն էր Իրաւաբան Դաւիթ Քալզինգ որ ձեռնհասօրէն վարեց օրուան յայտագիրը:

Բացման աղօթքը կատարեց՝ Վեր. Գեւորգ Թէրեան: Գեղարուեստական յայտագրին բաժին բերին՝ Պատուելի Յարութ Խաչատուրեան, հոգեշունչ՝ հոգեւոր եւ հայրենասիրական երգերով եւ դաշնամուրի վրայ նուագով եւ Բժշկի. Ալինա Մկրտիչեան Ժագ Յակոբեանի «Երբ Կը Մտնես Եկեղեցի» բանաստեղծութեան ասմունքով:

Օրուան բանախօսն էր՝ Կլէնտլի քաղաքապետ Ջարէի Սինանեան: Ան անդրադարձաւ Հայ համայնքի ներդրումի կարեւորութեան Գալիֆօրնիոյ մէջ եւ Հայաստանի ներկայ իրադարձութիւններուն մասին:

Եկեղեցւոյ Վարչութեան Ատենայտէ՝ Արա Ասիլեան ներկայացուց բանաստեղծ Ժագ Յակոբեանի նուիրական ծառայութիւնը Հայ ազգին իր Քրիստոսաշունչ եւ Հայրենասիրական բանաստեղծութիւններով: Եկեղեցւոյ Աւագ Հովիւը՝ Վեր. Սերոբ Մկրտիչեան եւ Հիւսիսային Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանական Միութեան Հովուապետ՝ Վեր. Պերճ Ճամպազեան յաջորդաբար



խօսք առնելով անդրադարձան նուիրեալ բանաստեղծին ստեղծագործութիւններուն եւ ծառայութեան եւ պարգևատրեցին 101 ամեայ բանաստեղծը Հայ Կիլիկիա Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի «Հայկական Խաչ» Յուշանուէրով: Ապա Կլէնտլի քաղաքապետի Պատուոյ Գիրը յանձնուեցաւ վաստակաշատ բանաստեղծին:

Հուսկ, 101-ամեայ բանաստեղծը յուզումով իր շնորհակալական խօսքը ուղղեց նախ Աստուծոյ եւ ապա Եկեղեցիին ու ներկաներուն եւ խիզախօրէն արտասանեց իր «Սուրբ Գիրքը Թող Բաց Մնայ» բանաստեղծութիւնը:

Ճաշկերոյթը իր աւարտին հասաւ ներկաներու Փառաբանութեան երգով եւ Վեր. Սերոբ Մկրտիչեանի օրհնութեան աղօթքով:



# Աւետարանչականը Անցեալը, Ներկան եւ Ապագան

Վեր. Հենրիկ Շահնազարեան\*

2017-ի Հոկտեմբերից սկսեալ ամբողջ մէկ տարի, զանազան երկրներում, ուր կայ Հայ համայնք եւ Հայ Աւետարանական ներկայութիւն, բազմազան միջոցառումներով նշուել է Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութեան հիմնադրութեան հարիւրամեակը: Այս մէկ տարին յարմար առիթ ստեղծեց փառք տալու Աստծուն Իր հաւատարմութեան համար Աւետարանչականը օրհնելու եւ օրհնութեան միջոց դարձնելու անցեալ մէկ դարուայ ընթացքին: Առիթ է նաեւ մի պահ ակնարկ նետելու անցեալին, Աստծուն փառք տալու նուիրումը առաջնորդների համար որոնց մտքի մէջ յղացաւ Աւետարանչականի ստեղծման գաղափարը, որոնք ամէն տեսակ նուիրումով իրականացրեցին այդ գաղափարը, առաջնորդեցին աշխատանքները, ընդարձակեցին ծառայութեան սահմաններն ու ասպաւզը եւ նպաստաւոր պայմաններ ստեղծեցին գործը շարունակելու համար: Հարիւրամեակը յարմար առիթ է նաեւ գնահատելու անցեալի աշխատանքը եւ նոր տեսիլքով շարունակելու ծառայութիւնը մեր ազգի մէջ՝ նորանոր վերելքների ականատես լինելու Աստուածային նպատակների իրականացման եւ Աստծու փառքի համար: Այս գրութեամբ նախ մի կարճ ակնարկ եմ նետելու Աւետարանչականի ստեղծման պատմութեան ու ծառայութեան: Ապա յիշելու եմ մի քանի Աստուածաշնչային հատուածներ, որոնք օգտակար են Քրիստոնէական Աստուածահանոյ ծառայութեան համար, ի ներ առեալ Աւետարանչականի:

Առաջին համաշխարհային պատերազմի ընթացքին մեր ազգը իր պատմութեան ամենացաւալի ու եղբրական օրերն էր ապրում Օսմանեան կայսրութեան սահմաններում: Արիւնարբու թուրքի ծրագրում ջանքերով գոհւում էին կայսրութեան տարածքում ապրող հայորդիներ, նրանց շարքում տասնեակ հազար աւետարանականներ, կործանւում էին եկեղեցիներ, դպրոցներ ու մշակութային կոթողներ ու կենտրոններ, ի ներ առեալ հարիւրաւոր Աւետարանական դպրոցներ, քոլէջներ ու ճեմարաններ: Եղեռնի առաջին իսկ օրերից արեւելքից հասնող ահռելի յուրերը ցնցեց հազարաւոր կիլոմետրներ հեռու, Ամերիկայի Արեւելեան ափերում բնակող Հայ Աւետարանական համայնքի առաջնորդներին: Նրանք միջոցներ փնտռեցին կազմակերպուելու ջարդից մազապուրծ հայորդիների անխնայ կերպով աշակցելու վերաշինելու եւ վերականգնելու աշխատանքներում:

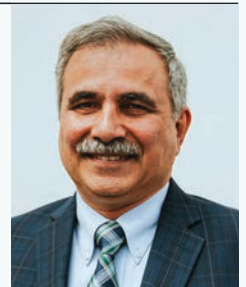
1918-ին Ամերիկայի Արեւելեան նահանգների Հայ Աւետարանական միութիւնը միաձայնութեամբ վաւերացրեց

հիմնադրելու Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութիւնը, որի նպատակն էր զօրացնելու մեր եկեղեցիների հոգեւոր կեանքը եւ հայրենիքի աւերակ դարձաց եկեղեցաշէնքերը: Նրանք համոզուած էին որ թէւ Հայ ազգը նահատակուեց, բայց տոկալու է որպէս առաջին քրիստոնէայ ազգ եւ շարունակելու է իր Աստուածային կոչումը՝ վկայելու իր Տիրոջ եւ Փրկչին Յիսուս Քրիստոսին, Նրա չարչարանքերին մասնակից լինելով: Նրանք նաեւ համոզուած էին որ հայ ազգը Քրիստոնէայ մշակոյթի ջահակիրն է լինելու Մերձաւոր Արեւելքի ժողովուրդների մէջ, որի իրականացման համար հայկական ժառանգութեան ու հոգեւոր կեանքի զարթոնքը անհրաժեշտ համարեցին: Սոյն նպատակները իրականացնելու համար կէս Միլիոն դոլարի հանգանակութեան կոչ եղաւ որին իրենց մասնակցութիւնը բերեցին մեծ թուով հայորդիներ ինչպէս նաեւ ոչ հայեր:

Աւետարանչականը իր մէկ դարեայ անցեալի մէջ աշխատել է աւետարանչութեան եւ հոգեւոր դաստիարակութեան, կրթական, մարդասիրական եւ բժշկական ասպարէզներում եւ ունեցել է երիտասարդներին վերաբերող յատուկ ծրագրեր:

Աւետարանչութիւնը տարբեր իմաստ ունի մարդկանց մօտ: Ոմանք այն հասկանում են որպէս Աւետարանի քարոզչութիւնը, Քրիստոսի միջոցով մարդու փրկութեան բարի յուրի անձնական կամ հաւաքական յայտարարութիւնը, ունկընդորդներին փրկութեան առաջնորդելու նպատակով, Աստուծոյ ներումը ճաշակելու եւ փոխում կեանք ապրելու նպատակով: Ուրիշների համար աւետարանչութիւնը կամ միսիոնարական ծառայութիւնը աւելի ընդարձակ իմաստ ունի: Եկեղեցու առաքելութիւնն է որ Աստուծոյ Թագաւորութեան բարի յուրը յայտարարել թէ խօսքով եւ թէ գործով՝ զանազան ծառայութիւններով տարբեր ասպարէզների մէջ: Աւետարանչական գործը, Աստուծոյ ծրագրին մաս կազմելն է, որ կ'ուզէ աշխարհը ազատագրել եւ հաշտեցնել Իր հետ: Եկեղեցին հաւաքականապէս եւ քրիստոնէան անձնապէս կանչուել է մաս կազմելու այս առաքելութեանը:

Աւետարանչականը կազմակերպման օրուանից մասնակից է եղել Աւետարանը քարոզելու, քրիստոնէական գրքեր հրատարակելու, նոր եկեղեցիներ հիմնելու եւ օգնութեան կարօտ եկեղեցիներին օժանդակելու եւ հոգեւոր դաստիա-



րակութեան աշխատանքների մէջ: Ներկայում այն հովանաւորում է 24 տարբեր երկրներում տարածուած մօտաւորապէս 150 եկեղեցիներ:

Աւետարանական համայնքների մէջ միշտ էլ մեծ կանոնորդութիւն է տրուել կրթութեան եւ հէնց այդ պատճառով եկեղեցու հիմնադրման հետ միասին յաճախ հիմնուել են կրթական օջախներ, որոնց հիմնադրման եւ աշխատանքների շարունակութեան մէջ մեծ ներդրում է ունեցել Աւետարանականը: Ամառնային համագումարներն ու Երիտասարդների բազմակողմանի զարգացման ծրագրերը Աւետարանականի ղեկավար կազմի եւ հովանաւորների սրտին մօտ ծրագրերից են եւ եղել: Վերջին տասնամեակներին աւելի են ընդլայնուել նման աշխատանքները:

Մինչ Աւետարանականը բոլորում է իր ծառայութեան առաջին հարիւր տարին, անցեալի յաջողութիւնները, հանրութեան մէջ ձեռք բերած վստահութիւնը եւ աղբիւրների բարի ու հաւատարիմ տնտեսութեան պատճառով առաջացած նպաստաւոր նիւթական վիճակը մեծ ապագայ են խոստանում եւ նոյն ժամանակ ներկայ ղեկավարութեանը մեծ պատասխանատուութեան առջեւ դնում ոչ միայն գործը նոյն թափով շարունակելու, այլ ներկայ դարի կարելիութիւններն ու կարիքները նկատի ունենալով նոր տեսիլքներ հետապնդել այս Աստուածակոչ եւ Աստուածահաճոյ առաքելութեան մէջ: Ընկերակցութեան ներկայի յաջող պայմանները պատճառ են դարձել որ Աւետարանականի հովանաւորութիւնները վայելող եկեղեցիները, հաստատութիւնները նաեւ Աւետարանական հովիւները բազմազան ակնկալիքներ ունենան Աւետարանականից: Սա առանց կասկածի մեծ պատասխանատուութիւն է առաջ բերում Ընկերակցութեան համար ներկայի եւ ապագայի ծրագրաւորումների գործում:

Աղօթքս է որ Աստուած շարունակի օրհնել Աւետարանականի պաշտօնեաներին ու ղեկավարներին եւ նրանց իմաստութիւն շնորհի որպէսզի Յիսուսի գութով լեցուած եւ Նրա օրհնակին հետեւելով շարունակեն իրենց աստուածահաճոյ ծառայութիւնը: Հետեւեալ համարները եւ մտքերը օգնել են ինձ կարիքի մէջ լինող մարդկանց օգնելու գործում, եւ աղօթքս է որ կարդացողի համար եւս օգտակար լինեն:

Մատթէոսի Աւետարանին մէջ կարդում ենք որ Յիսուս ման էր գալիս նրանց քաղաքներում, եւ շատ ժողովուրդ տեսնելով գթաց նրանց վրայ, որ յոգնած եւ ցիրուցան եղած էին եւ սկսեց շատ բաներ սովորեցնել նրանց, բժշկեց նրանց հիւանդներին, եւ ապա կերակրեց մի մեծ բազմութիւն հինգ հացով եւ երկու ձուկով (Մատթէոս 14:14-21, 9:35-36, Մարկոս 6:34-35):

Յիսուս տեսաւ մարդկանց կարիքը, հոգեւորը եւ ֆիզիքականը, գթաց նրանց վրայ եւ պատասխանեց ըստ նրանց կարիքի: Աւետարանների մէջ շատ յստակ է որ Քրիստոսի առաջնահերթութիւնը այն էր որ մարդիկ Աստծուն ճանաչեն եւ նրա հետ յարաբերութեան մէջ մտնեն, նրա սէրը վայելեն ու նրան հետեւեն: Բայց դա երբեք չի նշանակում որ դա անելու ենք ֆիզիքականը անտեսելով: Յակոբոս առաքեալը շատ պարզ կերպով մեզ յիշեցնում է որ աղօթելը եւ օգնութիւն ուզողի կարիքը անտեսելը բաւարար պատասխան չէ եւ օգնութեան համար մեզի դիմած եղբօրը կամ քրոջը կարիքը այդպիսով չի յազգեցուի (Յակոբոս 2: 14-17):

Երբեմն մեր աղբիւրները սահմանափակ են եւ չենք

կարող մեզնից խնդրողի ակնկալածը տալ, բայց սիրով տալու ենք այն որ կարող ենք որ նա եւս կարիք ունի, թէեւ իր ակնկալածը տարբեր բան է: Յովհաննէս եւ Պետրոս նիւթական օժանդակութիւն ուզող կադին բուժում շնորհեցին, որովհետեւ նիւթական կարելիութիւններ չունէին (Գործք Առաքելոց 3:1-10):

Երբեմն բողոք կայ թէ ինչու յատուկ ծրագրի համար մեծ գումար է նախատեսուում եւ ուրիշ ծրագրի համար ոչ: Դրա պատասխանը յաճախ այն է որ այս ծրագրի համար նուիրատուութիւնը աւելի շատ է միւսի համեմատութեամբ: Երբեմն մեր անցեալի անձնական կամ ընտանեկան փորձառութիւնը կամ վիճակը պատճառ է դառնում որ յատուկ կարիքի նկատմամբ աւելի զգայուն դառնանք: Հէնց այդ պատճառով շատեր աւելի պատրաստ են «իրենց սիրտին խօսող» մի կարիք յազգեցնելու համար մեծ ներդրում կատարել կամ այդ ուղղութեամբ գործօն մասնակցութիւն բերել, բայց ուրիշ կարիքի նկատմամբ անտարբեր լինել: Համոզուած եմ որ թէ հովիւները եւ թէ Աւետարանականի պատասխանատուները քարոզչական մեծ աշխատանք պէտք է տանեն ժողովրդի մէջ փափաք եւ հետաքրքրութիւն ստեղծելու բազմազան կարիք-րիքների եւ ծառայութիւնների նկատմամբ: Այն ժամանակ է որ անդամները եւ հովանաւորները զանազան ծրագրերի իրականացման համար պէտք եղած աղբիւրներ ու կարելիութիւններ են տրամադրելու: Աղօթքս է որ մեր նուիրատուութիւնների եւ ծառայութիւնների առաջին շարժառիթը լինի ուրիշի կարիքը հազգեցնելը եւ Աստծու անունի փառաւորուելը:

Չեմ կարող այս տողերը իր աւարտին հասցնել առանց իմ անձնական երախտիքը յայտնելու Աւետարանականին եւ նրա անցեալի եւ ներկայի ղեկավարութեանը: Տարրական եւ երկրորդական ուսումնա ստացել եմ Թեհրանի Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցու Գոհար Մեսրոպեան դպրոցում, որը հիմնուել ու հովանաւորուել ու հովանաւորում է Աւետարանականի միջոցով: Թէ Դպրոցում եւ թէ եկեղեցում սրտումս սերմանուել է հաւատքի սերմերը: Կնոջս, Մարիէթի հետ միասին Աւետարանականի եւ Մերձաւոր Արեւելքի Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիների Միութեան նիւթական ու բարոյական հովանաւորութեամբ կարողացել ենք ստանալ Աստուածաբանական ուսում եւ պատրաստուել ծառայութեան համար: Չաւակս Աննան վայելել է Աւետարանականի նիւթական հովանաւորութիւնը իր բարձրագոյն ուսման տարիներին: Ներկայում իմ ծառայած եկեղեցիներից մէկում վայելում ենք Աւետարանականի եւ Հիւսիսային Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանական Միութեան հովանաւորութիւնը Հայոց Լեզուի դասաւանդման ծրագրի համար: Աւետարանականը մեծ դեր է ունեցել մեր ընտանիքի անդամների հաւատքի եւ մտքի զարգացման մէջ, որի համար փառք եմ տալիս Աստծուն եւ շնորհակալ եմ Աւետարանականից: Աղօթքս է որ Աւետարանականի հովանաւորութիւնները վայելած շատ ուրիշներ իրենց ներդրումներով ու ծառայութիւնով իրենց մասնակցութիւնը բերեն Աւետարանականի առաքելութիւնը շարունակելու եւ ընդարձակելու գործում: □

*\* Վեր. Հէրիկ Շահնազարեան հովիւն է Կէլնուէլի (Բալիֆորնիա) Հայ Աւետարանական Սուրբ Երրորդութիւն Եկեղեցիի եւ Ժամանակաւոր Հովիւ՝ Լոս Անձելոսի Միացեալ Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի:*



## Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութեան Գործադիր Տնօրէն Զաւէն Խանճեանի Խօսքը Մեպտեմբեր 29, 2018-ին Երեւանի մէջ կայացող Աւետարանչականի 100-ամեակի Հացկերոյթին

«Մերմանո՞ղն է: - Յաղթահասակ կը կանգնի»

Հարիւր տարիներ առաջ, 1918-ին, հոյ մը հայորդիներ, գիտակից հայ ժողովուրդի յետ Եղեռմեան անմոռմոք ցաւին եւ կսկիծին եւ անսպով Աւետարանի սրբազան պատգամին ծնունդ տուին Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութեան: Մնացեալը պատմութեան կը պատկանի եւ անոր վկայութիւնն է: «Լի է ամբողջ ցորեններով աստղահաստ Խորունկ գոգնոցն:»



Յետ Եղեռմեան Միջին Արեւելքի ասպնջական երկիրներէն մինչեւ Եւրոպան եւ Ամերիկաները կայք հաստատող եւ վերջապէս Հայաստանի եւ Արցախի հեռաւոր սահմաններուն մէջ ապրող հայ ժողովուրդի հոգեւոր, իմացական եւ ֆիզիքական բարօրութիւնը նպատակ ունենալով, Աւետարանչականը լուռ եւ անտրտուն ծառայեց հայ ժողովուրդին: «Մըշա՛կ ցանէ՛.- յանուն տանըդ սեղանին Թելիդ շարժումն անպարագի՛ծ թող ըլլայ.»

Անխարդախ սիրով եւ համապարփակ ոգիով Աւետարանչականը իր հոգածութեան հովանին տարածեց այրիացած մօր, որբացած որդւոյն, անտէր մանուկին, հիւանդ պատանիին, անդէկ երիտասարդին, կրթութիւն եւ գիտութիւն տենջացող ուսանողին: Անոր ուշադրութեան առարկայ դարձաւ ցեղասպանութենէն ճողոպրած հայրենակորուստ զանգուածներէն մինչեւ Միջին Արեւելքի արդի պատմութեան աղետահար հայութիւնը, անկախ հայրենիքի քաղաքացին, սահմանամերձ հայ գիւղը եւ գիւղացին, բանակն ու զինծառայողը, վիրաւորն ու հիւանդանոցը, նահատակ հերոսի ծնողն ու զաւակները, բոլորին առողջութիւնը, կենսամակարդակը, ուսումն ու զարգացումը: «Մըշա՛կ, ցանէ՛.- յանուն նոթի թշուարին Թող գոգնոցէդ կէս չելլէ ավիդ բնաւ.»

Աւետարանչականը, դարաւոր Մայր Եկեղեցիի սրբազան առաքելութեան կողքին խիզախօրէն տարածեց Աստուծոյ խօսքը, բաժնեց Քրիստոսի բարի լուրը եւ հաւատքի ակունքներուն առաջնորդեց հայ անհատը: «Մըշա՛կ ցանէ՛.- յանուն Տիրոջ նըշխարին Թող մատներէդ յորդի սերմեր լուսեղեն. Վաղը ամէն մէկ հասկի մէջ կայծնային Պիտ՝ հասուննայ մաս մ՝Յիսուսի մարմինէն:»

Աւետարանչականի տեսիլքը հայ քաղաքացիի Էութեան կորումին մէջ կ'ընդգրկէ՝ խարսխուած ուղղամտութիւն, վերահա՛ւ՝ անխարդախ բարոյականութեան եւ անբասիր նկարագրի, ջատագով՝ ընկերային արդարութեան, խղճի, խօսքի եւ արտայայտուելու ազատութեան: Քաղաքացի՝ որ կը ներբողէ կամաւոր ծառայութիւնը, կը յարգէ մարդկային իրաւունքները եւ պատրաստ է զոհուելու հայրենիքի համար: Քաղաքացի՝ որ կը սիրէ Ստեղծիչը եւ կը ցոլացնէ անոր սէրը իր չորսդին: «Յանէ՛, ցանէ՛,- նոյնիսկ հեռու սահմանէն,»

Աւետարանչականը ցանէ՛ց՝ առանց խտրութեան, ցանէ՛ց՝ հայ ժողովուրդի հանդերու բոլոր ակոսներուն մէջ, ցանէ՛ց՝ անպարագիծ եւ առատ: Աւետարանչականը՝ ցանէ՛ց առանց ակնկալութեան, առանց փոխադարձ պահանջքի, առանց ծափահարութեան տենջանքին: Յանէ՛ց՝ «հաց ձգ՛է ջրոց երեսը Մի կարծեր թէ կ'ընկղմի» տրամաբանութեամբ:

Այսօր, Աւետարանչականի անխախտ համոզումն է թէ մեր հաւաքական տեսիլքին մէջ կանգուն, հզօր եւ գերիշխան պէտք է մնայ պատմական մեր դարաւոր հայրենիքի մնացորդաց այս սուրբ նշխար հայրենի հողը, որու վրայ կ'ապրի յաւերժական մեր ժողովուրդը: Մեր հաւաքական յանձնառութիւնը պիտի մնայ հաւատքի, ստեղծագործութեան, գիտութեան եւ քաղաքակրթութեան փարոս մը դարձնել այս հայրենիքը որու լուսաւոր ջահը պէտք է երկարի

շրջապատի լայնածառալ խաւարին մէջ, արդարացնելով մեր ստեղծման եւ գոյութեան Աստուածային առաքելութիւնը: Ահ'ա, Աւետարանչականի երկրորդ հարիւրամեակի սիրոյ, ծառայութեան եւ հաւատքի գոյապատճառը:

Աւետարանչականը՝ Սերմանո՛ղն է: - Յաղթահասակ կը կանգնի

Եկեք անմահն Վարուժանի հետ երկնենք.

«Լեցո՛ւր ակոսն, հորդէ՛ հերկերը բերրի  
(Հայրենիքի)  
Հողին ծոցէն ոսկի լոյսեր թող հոսին:»

Եկեք ցանե՛նք միասին:

## Սեպտեմբեր 29, 2018-ին Երեւանի մէջ կայացող Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութեան 100-ամեակի Հացկերոյթի Հանդիսավար Սոնա Խանճեանի Բարի Գալուստի Խօսքը



Կը փոխուին դերակատարները  
Կը փոխուին դէմքերը  
Կը փոխուին անունները  
Բայց ոգին՝ նոյնն է  
Անխոնջ, ժրաջան, անդուլ  
Եւ ոգին հոն է, ամէն ուր՝ որ պետք է ըլլայ  
Եւ ոգին կը սաւառնի, ճախրանքով մը  
յառաջանալով պատմութեան ընդմէջէն  
Զսպանակուած՝ Վարդանի հաւատքով  
Սպառազինուած՝ Մեսրոպեան շունչով  
Վերանորոգուած՝ Սարտարապատով  
Եւ արձակուած դարերու ընդմէջէն

Աւետարանչականը կռուան մըն է այդ ոգիի պացքի անսահման ճանապարհին  
Եւ անոր ծառայողներն ու սատարողները՝ այն լուսաշող ըղձանոյշներն՝ որոնց թելերուն վրայ հանգչած

կը ճեղքէ ժամանակներու տարածքը՝ փոխանցուելով սերունդէ սերունդ

Այսօր՝ մենք կը շնջենք զայն, կը պարուրուինք,  
Կը սփոփուինք, կը ներշնչուինք եւ կ'արբենանք իրմով  
Անգամ մը եւս:

Եւ ահաւասիկ հոս ենք բոլորով՝ Ամերիկա, Միջին Արեւելք, Եւրոպա.

Հոս՝, հայրենիքի հողին վրայ, որու պատմական տարածքէն մէծ մաս մը անիրաւօրէն խլուած ըլլալուն,  
ուրկէ անմարդկայնօրէն բռնի տեղահանուած ըլլալնուս, որք եւ անտուն, հացի կարօտ մեր վիճակը՝  
ծնունդ տուած էր Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութեան:

Այս պատմական անկիւնադարձային պահուն՝ հոս ըլլալը անսահման ուրախութիւն է ինծի համար, ըլլալով զաւակը  
հայ Աւետարանական հօր մը որ իր Աստուածատուր բազմաթիւ շնորհքները ի սպաս դրած էր ազգին, եկեղեցիին, եւ  
Աւետարանչականի ծառայութեան:

Պատանի հասակիս ծանօթացած եւ գնահատած էի Աւետարանչականի աշխատանքները: Այսօր կապրիմ եւ կը շնջեմ  
Աւետարանչականի առօրեան ու ապագայի ծրագիրները կողակից ունենալով Զաւէն Խանճեանը:

Անսահման ուրախութիւն է կանգնիլ ձեր դիմաց, բարի գալուստ մաղթել եւ հրաւիրել ձեզ միասին տօնախմբելու  
Աւետարանչականի հարիւրամեայ անգուգական ծառայութիւնը:





## Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութիւն Հաւատքի, Միրոյ եւ Ծառայութեան Հարիւրամեայ Աւանդ

Վեր. Դոկտ. Ժան Խանճեան\*

### Դ. Մաս

#### Կրթական Ասպարէզ

Հայ Աւետարանականներ միշտ եղած են ջատագով կրթութեան: Այս պատճառով անոնք ուսումնական ռահվիրայ եղած են դպրոցներ բանալով՝ եկեղեցիներու կողքին: Յեղասպանութենէն մագապուրծներ՝ ապաստան գտան վրաններու եւ թիթեղեայ խրճիթներու մէջ եւ դպրոցներ բացին վրաններու տակ եւ տախտակէ հիւղակներու մէջ: Աշակերտները գետնին վրայ կը նստէին վարագոյրով բաժնուած դասարաններու մէջ: Որքան որ կը յիշեմ Հալէպի Հայ Աւետարանական համայնքը աւելի դպրոցներ ունէր քան միւս համայնքները: Օրինակ՝ Հալէպի համեստ Ծէյի Մարտուտի ու Տավուտիէի շրջաններուն մէջ կային Հայ Աւետարանական նախակրթարաններ՝ 1940-ական թուականներուն: Կարգ մը դպրոցներ կէսօրուան տաք ճաշ կը մատուցանէին աղքատ աշակերտներուն, որոնցմէ մէկն ալ ես էի: Ժամանակի բոլորումով այս նախակրթարաններէն ոմանք աւելցուցին երկրորդական բաժիններ, եւ նոյնիսկ Պէյրութի մէջ հիմնուեցաւ Հայկազեան Գոլէճը (այժմ Համալսարան): Այս դպրոցները կը ծառայէին ազգի բոլոր զաւակներուն՝ անխտրաբար: Անոնք արտադրեցին կրթեալ եւ ուսեալ դասակարգ մը, որոնք կերտեցին յաջող ապագայ մը իրենց նախընտրած մարզին մէջ ու հպարտութեամբ ինքզինքնին կը ներկայացնեն որպէս Բերթէցի, Էմմանուէլցի կամ Կեդրոնական Վարժարանէն կամ Քաղաքի Հայ Սքուլէն շրջանաւարտ:

7 Յուլիս 1996-ին՝ երբ Երեւանի մէջ տօնուեցաւ Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի հիմնադրութեան 150-ամեակը, Ամենայն Հայոց Կաթողիկոս Գարեգին Ա. իր խօսքին մէջ

ըսաւ «...նրանց անմոռանալի երախտագիտական գործը, մասնաւորաբար արեւմտեան Հայաստանի եւ նաեւ, որոշ չափով, արեւելեան կողմի մեր Հայութեան դաստիարակչական, դպրոցական, կրթական մարզում: Ես գիտեմ ինչու եմ ասում, որովհետեւ բազմաթիւ դպրոցներ են բացուել եւ գիտութեան լոյսը առաւել չափով է տարածուել մեր ժողովուրդի մէջ Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի յստակ գործունէութեամբ:»<sup>8</sup>

Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութիւնը կենսական դեր ունեցաւ Հայ Աւետարանական կրթական ցանցէն ներս՝ հաւաքելով նուիրատուութիւնը, ապահովելով կալուածներ, շինելով դպրոցական շէնքեր, հայթայթելով կրթական նպաստ եւ շտապ օգնութեան հասնելով Միջին Արեւելքի պատերազմներու պատճառաւ ստեղծուած ճգնաժամներուն: Ներկայիս շուրջ 1000 աշակերտներ կրթական նպաստ կը ստանան, ինչպէս նաեւ 150 գոլէճականներ: Հետեւեալ տողերով կը ներկայացուի դպրոցներու համառօտ պատկերը:

**Հայաստան** օժտուած է արդիական կրթական հաստատութեամբ մը՝ Խորէն եւ Շուշանիկ Աւետիսեան Վարժարանը եւ Համայնքային Կեդրոնը, որ 500 աշակերտ ընդունելու կարողութիւնը ունի:

**Յունաստան** ունի մանկապարտէզ մը Գոգգինիայի եկեղեցիի հարկին տակ:

**Պարսկաստան**՝ որ իին գաղութ մը եղած է, ունի Գոհար Մեքրպեան Վարժարանը:

**Արցախ** ունի երիտասարդ բնակչութիւն մը, որոնց օգնութեան համար Աւետարանչականը հիմնած է չորս մանկապարտէզներ.- Ստեփանակերտի մէջ՝ Պաղտիկեան Մանկապարտէզ՝ հիմնուած 2001-ին, Շուշիի մէջ՝ Պիլեգիքեան Մանկապարտէզ՝ հիմնուած 2001-ին, Մարտակերտի մէջ՝ Մ. Պ. Ծանապեան Մանկապարտէզ՝ հիմնուած 2003-ին եւ Ասկերանի Մանկապարտէզ՝ հիմնուած 2003-ին:

**Լիբանան** եղած է հարուստ թէ եկեղեցիներով եւ թէ դպրոցներով, սակայն Լիբանանի 16-ամեայ քաղաքացիական պատերազմը մեծ վնասներ հասցուց դպրոցներուն: Յետ պատերազմին՝ 1995-ին վերաշինութիւնը սկսաւ Աւետարանչականի օգնութեամբ ու առաջնորդութեամբ, քանի որ Լիբանանի մէջ Հայ Աւետարանական հասարակութիւնը չգացած ու անկարողութեան մատնուած էր: Ներկայիս բոլոր դպրոցները նորոգուած ու բարեփոխուած են, սակայն



ՆՍՕՏՏ Գարեգին Ա.  
Ամենայն Հայոց Կաթողիկոս  
Հայ Աւետարանական  
Եկեղեցիներու հիմնադ-  
րութեան 150-ամեակի  
հանդիսութեան,  
Երեւանի մէջ:

կեանքի սղութեան պատճառով աշակերտները կրթական մեծ նպաստի կարիքը ունին: Հայկազեան Գոլէճը հիմնուեցաւ 1955-ին Ստեփան եւ Մարի Մելիակեաններու 25,000 տոլարի նուիրատուութեամբ՝ ի յիշտատակ Մարիի հօր՝ Տօթթ. Արմենակ Հայկազեանի, Գոնիայի Ճէնանեան Վարժարանի Տնօրէնին, որ մահացաւ ցեղասպանութեան ճամբուն վրայ: Տիկին Ֆլորէնս Կերթմէնեան Մելիակեան եւ Պր. Ստեփան Փիլիպոսեան նաեւ մասնակցեցան հիմնադրամին: Դոկտ. Ճան Մարգարեան եղաւ հիմնադիր Նախագահը եւ անմիջապէս ձեռնարկեց բարձրագոյն ուսման նոր օճախի մը կերտման՝ 43 աշակերտներով ու փոքր պիւտճեով, բայց լեցուն հաւատքով ու խանդավառութեամբ: Դոկտ. Մարգարեան ունեցաւ պաշտօնէութեան երկու շրջաններ, որոնց միջեւ ծառայեց Դոկտ. Ժիլպեր Պիլէգիբեան, որ երեք դժուարին տարիներ անցուց (1967-1971): Դոկտ. Մարգարեան սկսաւ տնօրէնութեան երկրորդ շրջանը 1971-



**Աւետիսեան Դպրոցի հիմնադրութեան առաջին տարիներուն:**

ին, որու ընթացքին Լիբանանի պատերազմը սկսաւ եւ այդ օրերուն իր գրասենեակին վրայ ժուր մը ինկաւ: 1982 տարեշրջանի վերջաւորութեան Դոկտ. Մարգարեան իր հրաժարականը տուաւ, որմէ ետք Դոկտ. Վրն Ֆելչըր՝ որ Պէյրութի Աստուածաբանական Ճեմարանի ուսուցիչ էր, Հայկազեան Գոլէճի նախագահի պաշտօնը վարեց Յունիս 1982 – Փետր. 1985: Պատերազմը սաստկացաւ եւ Գոլէճը ստիպուեցաւ պարպել համալիրը ու փոխադրուիլ Պէյրութի Արեւելեան շրջանը ու հաստատուիլ C.M.C. հիւանդանոցի նախկին շէնքին մէջ: Աւագ Ուսուցչապետ Ուիլմա Զոլագեան, խիզախօրէն եւ օգնութեամբ ուրիշներու դիմակայեց պատերազմի դժուակ պայմանները եւ Գոլէճը բաց պահեց, զայն ղեկավարելով շուրջ 11 դժուարին տարիներ: Վեր. Դոկտ. Ճան Խանճան Նախագահի պաշտօնը ստանձնեց 1 Օգոստ. 1995-ին ու ծառայեց մինչեւ 31 Օգոստ. 2002: Երկիրը վերաշինութեան եւ յոյսի շրջան մը կ'անցընէր: Դոկտ. Խանճեան միացաւ այս հաճելի ընթացքին Հայկազեան Գոլէճի հին համալիրի շէնքերը նորոգելով, նոր կալուածներ աւելցնելով ու փոխադրելով Գոլէճը վերագարդարուած ու նորոգուած շէնքերու մէջ: Ան վերամշակեց կրթական ծրագիրը ու գործընթացը: Անոր ամենակարեւոր յայտնաբերած փոփոխութիւնը եղաւ Գոլէճի անուանափոխումը՝ Համալսարանի՝ 1997-ին: Համալսարանը սկսաւ զարթնումի շրջան մը աշակերտներու ու կրթական ծրագիրներու աճումով: 1 Սեպտ. 2002-էն սկսեալ Վեր. Դոկտ. Փոլ Հայտօսթեան ստանձնեց Նախագահի պաշտօնը: Սկսուած զարթնումը շարունակեց մեծ նուաճումներով, ինչպէս հաստատումը Հայկական Սփիւռքի Ուսումնասիրութեան Կեդրոնին, որ

շատ բեղուն գործունէութիւններ ունի կազմակերպելով միջազգային համագումարներ սփիւռքահայութեան շուրջ, հրատարակելով գիրքեր Համալսարանի տպարանէն եւայլն: Յարդ Համալսարանը պարգեւած է 3860 Պատկաւոր (BA/BBA/BS) տիտղոսներ եւ 178 Մաքիստրոս (MA/MBA) տիտղոսներ: Դոկտ. Հայտօսթեան իր խոհեմ, ատակ ու փորձառու անձնաւորութեամբ կը շարունակէ առաջնորդել Համալսարանը: Մերձաւոր Արեւելքի Աստուածաբանական Ճեմարանը՝ շարունակութիւնը Թուրքիոյ մէջ խափանուած երեք ճեմարաններուն, հաստատուած է Պէյրութի մէջ 1932-ին: Գործակցաբար Հայկազեան Համալսարանին հետ, հովիւներ եւ Քրիստոնեայ դաստիարակներ կը պատրաստէ: Աւետարանականը գործակցաբար միսիոնարական ու երեք եկեղեցական մարմիններու հետ՝ նեցուկ կը կանգնի այս հաստատութեան, որմէ օգտուած են Սփիւռքի եւ Հայաստանի Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիները: Վերոյիշեալ բարձրագոյն կրթական հաստատութիւններէն զատ՝ Լիբանան ունի չորս երկրորդական վարժարաններ՝ Հայ Աւետարանական Գոլէճ, Կեդրոնական Բարձրագոյն Վարժարան, Նոր Մարաշի Շամլեան Թաթիկեան Վարժարան եւ Անճարի Հայ Աւետարանական Վարժարան օտուած մանկապարտէզով ու նախակրթարանով, եւ մէկ միջնակարգ վարժարան՝ Նոր Ամանոսի Թորոսեան Վարժարանը, որոնք մեծ զոհողութեամբ հայեցի եւ Քրիստոնէական դաստիարակութիւն կը շամբեն:

**Սուրիա** կը շարունակէ իր ողբերգական պատերազմը, որու պատճառաւ երկրին ժողովուրդը կը պարպուի: Հալէպ ունէր հինգ Հայ Աւետարանական վարժարաններ եւ Հալէպ Գոլէճը, սակայն ներկայիս ունի միայն Բեթլ Երկրորդական Վարժարանը, զոր կը պահուի մեծ զոհողութեամբ: Բաց է նաեւ Սիրիանի Աւետարանական Վարժարանը: Հալէպ Գոլէճի կալուածը բաժնուեցաւ Հայ Աւետարանական Համայնքի եւ Արաբ Երիցական Սինոտի միջեւ, ուր նաեւ հաստատուած է մմանուէլ նախակրթարանը: Դամասկոսի մէջ կը շարունակուի մէկ նախակրթարան դպրոց: Քէսապի նախակրթարանը վնասուեցաւ, սակայն մեծ աշխատանքներով վերաբացուեցաւ եւ կը շարունակէ իր ծառայութիւնը:

**Թուրքիա** ունի մէկ դպրոց՝ Հրանդ Տինգի անուամբ, որ հիմնուած է 2003-ին Կէտիկ Փաշայի եկեղեցաշէնքին մէջ: Բայց նախ քան այդ, 1950-ական թուականներուն Պր. Հրանդ Կիւզէլեան յղացած էր Պոլսոյ Պատանեկան Տունը հիմնելու գաղափարը, որ իրականացած էր Վեր. Բիւզանդ Գալֆայեանի քաջալերութեամբ եւ Վեր. Եղուարդ Թովմասեանի հետեւողական աշխատանքով ու անոր թիկունք կանգնելով: Այս տունը օգտակար եղաւ 1500-է աւելի պատանիներու փրկութեան:

**Ամերիկայի Միացեալ Նահանգներու** մէջ Հայ Աւետարանականներ տարիներով երազած են ունենալ դպրոց մը, որ վերջապէս իրականացաւ 1980-ին, երբ Էլիզ եւ Շարլօթ Մերիտեան քոյրերը կոկիկ գումար մը նուիրեցին այս նպատակին համար: Վարժարանը հաստատուեցաւ 1982-ին Քալիֆորնիայի Շրքմըն Օգս քաղաքին մէջ: Մերտինեան Հայ Աւետարանական Վարժարանը ունի մանկապարտէզէն մինչեւ 8-րդ դասարան (Միջնակարգ) եւ ճանաչում կը վայելէ վարկատու պաշտօնական մարմիններէն (WASC – Արեւմտեան Ընկերակցութիւն դպրոցներու եւ Գոլէճներու) իբրեւ որակ ու մակարդակ ունեցող հաստատութիւն:

Վերջաւորութեան նաեւ հարկ է յիշել, թէ իւրաքանչիւր եկեղեցի իր կողքին ունի Կիրակնօրեայ դպրոց, պատանեաց եւ





**Պեյրուօի Հայ Աւետարանական Ա. Եկեղեցիի  
պատանիներ – 1962:**

երիտասարդաց կազմակերպություններ որոնք Քրիստոնէական դաստիարակութիւն կը ջամբեն:

## Երիտասարդաց Ծրագիրներ

Աւետարանական Ընկերակցութիւնը միշտ թիկունք կանգնած ու քաջալերած է երիտասարդաց ծրագիրները, քանի որ անկէ կախեալ է մասամբ մը եկեղեցիներուն ու համայնքին ապագան: Երիտասարդաց ծրագիրները տարբեր տեսակի ու մակարդակի գործունէութիւններ ունին, որոնք կախեալ են անհատներու տարիքէն: Անոնք կ'ընդգրկեն Կիրականօրեայ դպրոցները, Պատանեաց, Ջանից կամ Երիտասարդաց կազմակերպութիւնները, Ամառնային Սուրբ Գրոց դպրոցները եւ ճամբարները բոլոր տարիքներու համար: Երիտասարդաց ծառայութիւնները իրենց տարբեր մակարդակներով արգասաբեր դաշտեր եղած են, ուր ապագայ հովիւներ աճած ու մեծցած ու նուիրուած են եկեղեցական եւ քրիստոնէական դաստիարակութեան ասպարէզին: Եկեղեցիի մը հոգեւոր առողջութիւնը կախեալ է անդամներու հոգեւոր փորձառութենէն եւ հոգեւոր սնունդէն: Այս սնունդը կը սկսի Կիրականօրեայ դպրոցներու, Պատանեաց եւ Երիտասարդաց կազմակերպութիւններու մէջ, ինչպէս նաեւ ամառնային ճամբարներու՝ ուր անձը կը սնանի ու հոգեւորապէս կ'աճի: Մեծ եկեղեցական միութիւններ ունին իրենց ճամբարները: Հայաստանի Աւետարանական եկեղեցիները ունին լայնատարած ճամբար մը՝ Շին Շողիկ, Հանքաւանի գեղատեսիլ հովիտին մէջ, որու հիմը կու գայ Սովետական շրջանէն: Նոյնպէս Արցախ ունի իր կոկիկ ճամբարը՝ Պետրոսեան անունով՝ Շուշիի մէջ, որ հիմնադրուած է Ֆրէզնոյի Պետրոսեան ընտանիքին կողմէ, որուն նաեւ կը շարունակեն նեցուկ կանգնիլ իրենց տարեկան նուիրատուութեամբ: Այս երկու ճամբարները ունին աշխատակիցներ, որոնք տարեկան ծրագիրներ կը պատրաստեն հազարաւոր երեխաներու ու պատանիներու համար: Ֆրանսայի Միութիւնը ունի երկու ճամբարներ – Լա Ֆօնթանէլ եւ Լա Սուրս: Մերձաւոր Արեւելքի Միութիւնը որ կ'ընդգրկէ Սուրիա եւ Լիբանան, իւրաքանչիւր երկրին մէջ ունի մէկական ճամբար, որոնք կը կոչուին ՔՋԱԿ: Լիբանանի ՔՋԱԿը տեղաւորուած է մայրիներու անտառի մը մէջ՝ Պեյրուօի արեւելեան բարձունքներուն վրայ: Լիբանանի 16 տարիներու քաղաքացիական պատերազմի

ընթացքին այս կեդրոնը տարբեր զինեալ խումբերու կողմէ գրաւուեցաւ եւ կործանուեցաւ: Բայց վերջին քանի մը տարիներու ընթացքին, նորոգուած եւ գործածելի դարձած է շնորհիւ Աւետարանական Ընկերակցութեան եւ ՔՋԱԿի բարեկամներու աշխատանքներուն: Սուրիոյ ՔՋԱԿը որ վնասուած էր պատերազմի պատճառաւ, ներկայիս նորոգուած է եւ գործօն: Միացեալ Նահանգներն ալ ունի երկու ճամբարներ՝ ԱՐԵԲԵԼԶ ճամբարը (վարձուած), որ կը գտնուի Արեւելեան ափին վրայ, իսկ երկրորդը ԱՐԵԲ ճամբարը, Քալիֆօրնիայի մէջ: ԱՐԵԲ ճամբարը ընդարձակ վայր մըն է, որ կը գտնուի անտառներու հովիտի մը մէջ, Լոս Անճելոսէն մէկ ժամ հեռու: Տարուան տարբեր եղանակներուն, եւ յատկապէս ամռան տարբեր տարիքի երեխաներու, պատանիներու, երիտասարդներու եւ այլ խմբակներու համար ճամբարներ կը կազմակերպուին այնտեղ: Աւետարանականը նաեւ կ'օգնէ Պելմիքայի եւ Պուլկարիայի եկեղեցիներուն, կազմակերպելու տարեկան ճամբարներ վարձուած վայրերու մէջ:

## Մարդասիրական Օգնութիւն

Այս եղած է Աւետարանականի յատկանշական գործունէութիւնը՝ առաջին օրէն իսկ: Անոր մարդասիրական օգնութիւնը սահմանուած չէ ազգային կամ կրօնական նկատումներով: Երբ մարդկային աղէտներ պատահին՝ ան օգնութեան ձեռք կ'երկարէ: Հայ համայնքին ծառայութիւններ կը մատուցանէ՝ հասնելով հիւանդին, ծերին, որբին, որբեւայրիին, աղքատին, անկեալին եւ տեղահանուածին: Այս աշխատանքները կը տարուին տեղական եկեղեցիներու եւ ընկերային ծառայութեան կեդրոններու միջոցով եւ Աւետարանականի հերթական աջակցութեամբ: Օրինակի համար, Աւետարանականը դրամական նպաստ կու տայ ընտանիքներու եւ տարեցներու որոնք կը գտնուին Հայաստան, Պրագի, Պուլկարիա, Գանատա, Վրաստան, Լիբանան, Սուրիա եւ Ուրուկուէ: Կարգ մը երկիրներ իրենց մասնաւոր տաղնապալից պարագաներուն, պատճառ ունին օգնութեան մեծ կարիքի՝ ինչպիսին են Հայաստան, Լիբանան եւ Սուրիա:

Հայաստանի համար Աւետարանականը ունի օգնութեան ծրագիր մը 1600 մանուկներու եւ ընտանիքներու, խնամակալութեան ծրագիր մը ծերերու, Երեւանի մէջ մնայուն կերպով կը պահէ Այնիլեան դարմանատունը, Ատամնաբուժարան մը Վանաձորի մէջ, եւ Հանքաւանի ճամբարը ուր շուրջ 1600 մանուկներ կը հանգստանան ու



**Հայաստանի եւ  
Արցախի կարիքաւոր  
մանուկներու կաթի  
մատակարարութիւն:**



**Ձկանիւղի մատակարարություն Հայաշենի Հայ Աւետարանական Վարժարանի աշակերտներուն 1950-ական տարիներուն (Լիբանան):**

կը սնանին հոգեւորապէս եւ ֆիզիքապէս: Մանուկներու խնամակալութեան ծրագիրը կը հովանաւորէ Աւետարանական Որբերու եւ Կարիքաւոր Երեխաներու Խնամակալութեան Յանձնախումբը, որ սկսաւ իր աշխատանքներուն Հայաստանի երկրաշարժէն անմիջապէս ետք: Մանուկներու կաթ կը բաժնուի շուրջ 500 ընտանիքներու: 9000-է աւելի մանուկներ կը ստանան Ծնունդի նուէրներ: Աւետարանականը նաեւ կ'օգնէ մանուկներու խնամք տանող կեդրոններու, մանկամուրներու, մանկական հիւանդանոց-դանոցներու եւ զոհուած զինուորներու եւ ազատամարտիկներու ընտանիքներուն: Վերջերս օգնութեան ցանկին աւելցան Սուրիահայ գաղթականներ, որոնց Աւետարանականը օգնեց Հայաստան փոխադրուելու ու հաստատուելու: Հայ Բժշկական Առաքելութիւնը, առաջնորդութեամբ Տօքթ: Ալպերթ Փիլիփսի, ինը տարիներէ ի վեր Հայաստան կը մեկնի իր հետ տանելով կամաւոր բժիշկներ, բժշկական մասնագէտներ եւ բուժքոյրեր, եւ գաւառներու մէջ Հայ ժողովուրդին ձրի բժշկական օգնութիւն կը մատուցանեն: Այս խումբը սկսաւ իր ծառայութիւնը մատուցանել Լոռիի մարզի Ստեփանաւան եւ Վանաձոր քաղաքներու մէջ, ապա իրենց ցանկին աւելցուցին նաեւ Սիւնիքի մարզին մէջ Սիսիան քաղաքը ինչպէս նաեւ Երեւանը:

Արցախի մէջ նպաստ կը ստանան շուրջ 200 որբեր, կարօտեալ մանուկներ եւ կաթնամաշտի կարօտ նորածիններ: Ծուշիի ճամբարին մէջ հարիւրաւոր մանուկներ եւ պատանիներ կը սնանին հոգեպէս եւ ֆիզիքապէս եւ հարիւրաւոր երեխաներ Ծնունդի առթիւ կը ստանան նուէրներ: Ծուշիի մէջ Աւետարանականը նաեւ հաստատած է Ծոդ Յերեկային Կեդրոնը ուր մանուկներ դպրոցական ժամերէն ետք կու գան իրենց դասերը պատրաստելու, սնուցանուելու եւ այլ այլ տեսակի ընկերային ծառայութեան օգնութիւն ստանալու՝ հարկ եղած պարագային: Այս բոլորին կողքին նաեւ Արցախի պատերազմին զոհուած զինուորներու եւ ազատամարտիկներու ընտանիքները հերթական նպաստ կը ստանան Աւետարանականէն:

Լիբանան գտնուող կարօտեալներ նպաստ կը ստանան Հայ Աւետարանական Ընկերային Ծառայութեան Կեդրոնին միջոցով: Աւետարանականը կ'օգնէ Լիբանանի Հայ Ծերա-

նոցին եւ Անկարներու Կեդրոնին, ինչպէս նաեւ Սուրիահայ փախստականներու, որոնք Լիբանանի մէջ ապաստան գտած են:

Սուրիա գտնուող հայութիւնը անկարող է իր նիւթական ապրուստը ապահովելու պատերազմի պատճառաւ: Անոնց կեանքը կախեալ է արտաքին օգնութենէ: Աւետարանականը եւ ուրիշ կազմակերպութիւններ կը լեցնեն այս կարիքը հերթական նիւթական եւ սնունդ բաժնելով: Եկեղեցիներ, դպրոցներ, հովիւներ, հանգստեան կոչուած ուսուցիչներ, Կոյրերու Ընկերակցութիւնը եւ Ծերանոցը նպաստ կը ստանան շարունակաբար:

Պատշաճ է անդրադառնալ Հայ Աւետարանական Ընկերային Ծառայութեան Կեդրոնի մատուցած ծառայութեան՝ 1970-ական թուականներուն եկող Հայ գաղթականներուն, որոնք հաստատուեցաւ Լոս Անճելոսի Հալիվուտի շրջանին մէջ: Աւետարանականը քաջալերեց այս ծրագիրը ոչ միայն առաջին տարուայ ծախսերը հոգալով, այլ տարեկան օգնութեամբ: Կեդրոնի պաշտօնական բացումը կատարուեցաւ 1977-ին: Կեդրոնը մատուց ընկերային ծառայութիւն զանազան մարցերու մէջ՝ ինչպէս գաղթականներու խորհրդատուութիւն մատուցանելով, աշխատանք ապահովելով, ուսումնական մարզի մէջ օգնելով, եւ անգլերէնի ու Ամերիկեան մշակոյթի նիւթեր դասաւանդելով: Կեդրոնը իր աշխատանքները դադրեցուց 31 Մարտ, 2012-ին:

Աւետարանականի հարիւրամեակի 20 միլիոն տոլարի արշաւին կապակցութեամբ հրատարակուած գրքոյկին մէջի հետեւեալ հատուածը հակիրճ կերպով կը նկարագրէ Ընկերակցութեան ջանքերը.- «Հարիւր տարիներ ԱՀԱԸ-ը Տէրոջ ծառայեց, հաւատքը գործնականացուց մեր կարիքաւոր եղբայրներուն եւ քոյրերուն, օգնեց եկեղեցիներուն դպրոցներ եւ ամառնային կեդրոններ հաստատելով, կենսաբար բուժ օգնութիւն տալով, կրթական առիթներ ստեղծելով եւ կարօտեալին օգնելով: Հաւատքի, սիրոյ եւ ծառայութեան այս կտակով ապագան կը դիմագրաւենք, որպէսզի կարենանք աւելիով մեր ծառայութիւնը մատուցանել Տէրոջ՝ օգնելով ուրիշներու»:<sup>9</sup>

Աւետարանականը կը դիմագրաւէ հսկայական մարտահրաւեր՝ աւետարանչութեան, կրթութեան, երիտասարդութեան եւ բարեգործութեան լայն ծիրերէն ներս: Այս բոլոր մարտահրաւերները հաւասարապէս դիմագրաւել մեծ իմաստութիւն, սէր եւ կորով կը պահանջեն: Աստուծոյ յուսալով եւ մեր ժողովուրդին աջակցութեամբ, Աւետարանականը պիտի կարենայ հանդիսանալ սիրոյ կամուրջը՝ պահելով իր տեսիլքը ու առաքելութիւնը: Կարելորը Յիսուսի պատուէրին անսպին է, որ կ'ըսէ.- «Ուրեմն, գրած եղէք, ինչպէս ձեր հայրն ալ գրած է:» Դուկաս 6.36

*Վերջ*



*Վեր. Դոկտ. Ժան Խաննէան նախկին նախագահն է Պէրոյի Հայկազեան Համալսարանի:*

8. Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցի (Պարբերաթերթ), Երեւան 1996  
9. The Centennial Campaign, AMAA, p.1

*\* Ծնողականութեան արժանի է Լուիզա Ճանայագեանի օգնութիւնը եւ ներդրումը այս գրութեան պատրաստութեան համար:*



## The Genesis and Early Development of the Armenian Missionary Association of America By Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian

By Rev. Peter Doghramji, Ph.D.

This volume is a timely celebration of the Centennial of the Armenian Missionary Association of America, authored by a uniquely qualified church historian, minister and theologian.

Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian is a teacher of the Armenian Evangelical community worldwide and has worked diligently to have a complete history of the birth and maturation of the AMAA. As he puts it in his concluding paragraphs, this is not only a “retrospective” look at the history of the AMAA, but also an “introspective” study of the lessons we learn from that history. It is also a “prospective” direction of the AMAA within the larger context of the hopes and aspirations of the entire Armenian community in America and abroad.

This book also covers, in part, a historical review of the Armenian Evangelical Church. Rev. Dr. Tootikian rightly highlights the dictum, that the Church cannot be devoid of mission and, conversely, mission without the Church cannot survive. Both are intertwined for the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and service in His name. The AMAA was born in the arms of the AEU which nursed it, organized it, and structured its *raison d’être*.

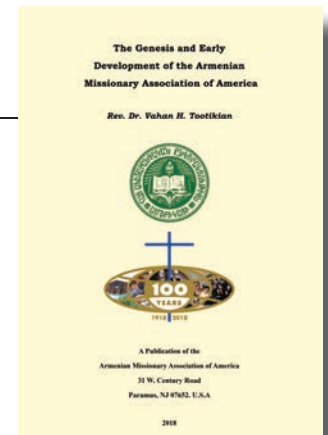
A century ago, Armenians were being decimated by the Geno-

cide. Providentially the pain and suffering they experienced became the birth pangs of the Church to bring forth the AMAA, not because of the Genocide but in spite of it. The AMAA was the response of the Armenian Christianity to the atrocities of an evil empire.

This book is rather small in size and few in pages, but it is encyclopedic in portraying the lives and services of dedicated lay people as well as pastors. Through the AMAA they were able to reach out to a bereaved community and share the Good News of Christ by word and deed.

Armenians worldwide owe a word of gratitude to Rev. Dr. Tootikian for introducing the calling of the AMAA to the celebrants of the next bicentennial.

Copies of the book may be purchased from the AMAA office: 31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652 or by visiting the AMAA Bookstore at [www.amaa.org](http://www.amaa.org). Price: \$20.00 plus shipping and handling \$5.00.



**Editor's Note:** At the threshold of the Centennial the AMAA commissioned Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian to research and publish the history of the founding of the AMAA. In his famous diligence, Rev. Tootikian brilliantly completed the task and the book has seen the light and is available at the AMAA bookstore. We thank Rev. Tootikian for this gracious and timely accomplishment.





## A Tribute to Samuel Hekemian, Jr.

*(The following is a tribute to Samuel Hekemian, Jr. delivered by Zaven Khanjian, Executive Director/CEO of the AMAA, at Mr. Hekemian's funeral at the Armenian Presbyterian Church in Paramus, NJ on August 31, 2018. See Samuel Hekemian's obituary on page 45.)*

It's risky to indulge in the records of the AMAA. Successive AMAA administrations have diligently maintained a seamless record of Board minutes over the course of its hundred-year history. No, there is no danger from the paper records. They are legible, devoid of harmful material. The danger is in one's inability to get out of that trap of joy, nourishment, education, knowledge and amazement of the wisdom, labor and intellect that generations of elite AMAA leadership have invested and sacrificed for the good of the mission and the Glory of God.

A century of vision, planning, hard work, sweat, giving and sacrifice has shored the foundation of this God blessed organization one brick at a time.

Serving the AMAA for many decades, Sam Hekemian, Jr. was a brick that held the organization; solid, strong, faithful.

My indulgence in the Board of Directors' minutes of 1979-80 brought to light how Sam Hekemian, Jr., President of the Armenian Missionary Association of America during that time, exceptionally led the AMAA Board to overcome the storms of

- a civil war humanitarian crisis in Lebanon
- a consequential financial crisis in Lebanon's Armenian school system
- the confiscation of Armenian properties in Turkey, seizure of Camp Armen and the persecution of its Director, Hrant Guzelian.

Sam Hekemian led the organization and experienced the joy of guiding it safely through the valleys of anxiety and the crossroads of impasse.

The Hekemian Brothers are household names at 31 W. Century Rd., Paramus, New Jersey. Every day, on either floor of the Association's Headquarters, I constantly encounter their names on plaques as members of the Building Committee or the gracious donors of the AMAA Board Room 'for the glory of God and in Memory of their parents Sam and Elizabeth Hekemian.'

It is not surprising that in his opening remarks at the first Board meeting Sam presided over as President of the AMAA, the minutes reflect that he said, 'his father and the whole family have been involved for many years with the work of the Association and he will do his best.'

Sam loved his Lord and honored his parents.

In John 15:10 Jesus says, "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My Love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His Love."

As children of God we are blessed with creativity, independence and freedom of choice to carve our own paths. But we have beholden role models in both our heavenly and earthly fathers who deserve our love, respect and obedience.

May we honor the legacy of this God loving man, Sam Hekemian, Jr. by upholding his faithfulness and perpetuating his memory reflecting his love of God, his people, humanity and the AMAA.

On behalf of the Armenian Missionary Association of America, its President Dr. Nazareth Darakjian and the entire Board, and my wife Sona, I extend deepest sympathies to Mrs. Sandra Hekemian, Peter and Genevieve, Jeffery and Rachel, Richard, Mark and Brittany, the grandchildren, extended family and friends. May he rest in peace!



## Rev. Dr. Habib Alajaji

Rev. Dr. Habib B. Alajaji was born in Aleppo, Syria on August 28, 1937. He was raised in a loving Christian home, the oldest of five children born to Basil and Nartouhi Khosrofian Alajaji.



At the age of 11, he accepted Christ as his personal savior, with his mother's influence. He moved to Beirut, Lebanon at the age of 19 to finish high school, and attended a service where a missionary speaker gave a call to ministry.

He began attending Evangelical Theological School. In September 1970, he joined the Church of the Nazarene in Beirut where he served as Pastor and later as the District Superintendent of the Lebanon, Syria and Jordan Districts. His knowledge of the Armenian, English, Arabic and Turkish languages made him a strategic leader in the church's Middle East efforts. In 1974, he received his Bachelor of Theology degree from the Near East School of Theology.

In 1978, the Church of the Nazarene's World Mission department convinced Habib to leave the area until the war subsided. Dr. Gerald Johnson suggested a six-month trip to the U.S. to raise funds and awareness for the Middle East, and ultimately, Habib and Ruth and their four children moved permanently to the U.S. in 1979. Later that year, under the guidance of the Los Angeles District and Dr. Benefiel, they established the first Armenian Church of the Nazarene in the United States in Glendale, CA.

Habib continued his education, receiving a M.A. in Religion and a Ph. D. of Philosophy from the California Graduate School of Theology. He continued to serve in Glendale for 25 years, preaching regularly on the Armenian television channel as well as traveling to teach in Armenia and Cyprus at the European Nazarene Bible College.

After the earthquake in 1988, the Lord opened the door for Habib to visit Armenia and led him to start churches in Yerevan and Gyumri, the beginning of the Nazarene ministry in Armenia. The Glendale church was also instrumental in starting churches in Whittier, Pasadena, and North Hollywood, CA. Being a Badveli was his favorite role, leading souls to Christ and teaching from the Word of God.

In 2005, he officially retired from full time ministry, but continued to serve the Lord, preaching in Australia and teaching and preaching in Armenia. He continued to serve as Pastor Emeritus in Glendale, leading weekly Bible studies and helping as needed. Habib enjoyed the role of mentor and advisor and encouraged Hrag Karagoezian as he passed on the torch of pastoral leadership of the Glendale church.

Badveli Alajaji passed away peacefully at his home on Sunday, October 14, 2018. He is survived by his wife Ruth Pashgian Alajaji; son Bill Alajaji; daughters Nora Wilson (Rev. Stephen), Hilda Hovsepian (Shant), and Rhoda Alajaji; and grandchildren David Wilson, James Wilson, Hannah Wilson, and Yevah Hovsepian.

Funeral services were held on Friday, October 19 at Church of the Reformation, Forest Lawn, Glendale, CA. Memorial donations may be sent to the Armenian Church of the Nazarene in Glendale, CA. □

## Vahe Barsoumian

Vahe Barsoumian, age 80, passed away on November 1, 2018 in Sherman Oaks, CA.

Vahe was born on May 20, 1938 in Aleppo, Syria to Puzant and Rozine Barsoumian becoming the youngest of three children along with his eldest sister Artemis, and older brother Albert. He grew up in a loving Christian home and attended the Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel School in Aleppo for his elementary education and continued his academic instruction at Aleppo College. He enjoyed singing in the church choir with his siblings and friends.

The Barsoumian family moved to the United States and settled in Southern California, where he opened his own dry-cleaning business and worked in that field for over 30 years. In 1980, Vahe met Flora Kalaydjian and married her on August 2, 1981 in Los Angeles. God soon blessed them with two children: Shant and Taleen born only a little over a year apart. Shant became a Pastor and is serving in the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America working with the youth. Taleen became an elementary school teacher and served at Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School. Taleen married Movses Sherbetjian bring-



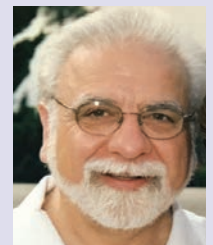
ing more joy into Vahe's life especially after the birth of their son, Vahe's only grandchild Jacob, in 2016.

Vahe was a hard-working, selfless and faithful individual who always tried to meet the needs of others and did everything with a smile and good humor.

Funeral services were held on November 7 at Forest Lawn Cemetery. Vahe is survived by his wife Flora, son Shant, daughter Taleen, son-in law, Movses, and grandson Jacob. He also leaves behind his brother Albert, his wife Sona, their children Ara and Tanya, sister Artemis O'Donnell, her children Gerry O'Donnell wife Kimberly and their family and Bobby O'Donnell as well as many other family members and friends. □

## Zaven Bilezikjian, M.D.

Zaven Garabed Bilezikjian of Santa Ana, CA, affectionately known as "Dr. B," passed away on September 27, 2018 after an eight-year battle with prostate cancer. He was 76.



He was born in Aleppo, Syria to Armenian parents, Youhanna and Zabel Bilezikjian. Following his early education at the Armenian Emmanuel Evangelical Elementary School and high school years at Aleppo College, Zaven attended the American University of Beirut (AUB), graduating from medical school in 1966. After completing a year of internship at the University of Pennsylvania-affiliated Philadelphia General Hospital in 1967, Zaven enlisted in the Navy and was assigned to a Marine Unit in Camp Pendleton. He was deployed to Vietnam for one year, which included a field hospital outside of Da Nang and an orthopedic surgical unit in Saigon. In 1969, Zaven voluntarily resigned his Navy commission as Lieutenant Junior Grade to resume civilian life and continue his medical training.

Zaven returned to Southern California for his Orthopedic Surgery Residency training at UCLA from 1969 to 1974. He subsequently started an Orthopedic Surgery practice in La Palma, CA. "Dr. B" ultimately had offices at both La Palma and Anaheim Memorial Hospitals and had a surgery career that lasted more than 25 years. He was well respected by his colleagues and more than once was elected Chief of Staff and Chief of Surgery.

During his residency at UCLA, Zaven married Charlene (Sherry) Tipton and they were married from 1971 to 1985. Zaven and Sherry had three children: Tanya, Sandra and Mark. Zaven was a loving and caring Dad who enjoyed family-time with his children and was always there for them.

In 1999, Zaven met Jamie Yale Colucci and they were married in 2002. Zaven became a beloved step-dad to Jamie's eleven-year-old daughter, Gina Colucci. Zaven and Jamie had a wonderful life of traveling, enjoying their blended family and entertaining family and friends. Zaven was a great tennis, chess, backgammon, *belotte*, and bridge player. He was an avid reader of a wide range of topics, played the piano beautifully and had a tremendous appreciation and knowledge of classical music. He was greatly loved and will be remembered fondly by all who knew him.

Zaven was predeceased by his parents and his niece Tina Bilezikjian Alunni. He is survived by his wife, Jamie, and his children Tanya, Sandra, Mark and Gina. He is also survived by his brother Vahe (Grace), sisters Berta (Richard) and Louise (Rick), nephew John (Marilia), nephew-in-law Tony Alunni, grandnieces and a grandnephew, in-laws and cousins.

A private memorial service officiated by Rev. Dr. Vartkes Kassouni was held November 10 at the Tustin Presbyterian Church in Orange Country, CA. Donations may be made to the Zabel and Youhanna Bilezikjian Endowment Fund at the AMAA in memory of Zaven Bilezikjian. □

## Krikor M. Heghinian

Krikor M. Heghinian of Watertown, MA passed away on September 29, 2018. He was 71.

Krikor was born in Aleppo, Syria on February 28, 1947, brother to five sisters who were by his side since his health deteriorated. His life took him from the humblest beginnings in Aleppo, Syria to the highest reaches of science and to far corners of the world. He went first to Beirut where he earned his bachelor's degree and then joined his entire family who had immigrated to Watertown.

Krikor earned his master's degree from Northeastern University and began his career at Harvard Medical School. He worked there with future Nobel laureate Baruj Benacerraf with whom he pub-



lished six papers. In his final months at Mass General Hospital, he encountered doctors from all over the world. When a doctor from Egypt came in, Krikor spoke with him in Arabic. A Turkish doctor was surprised when he spoke Turkish. There was even an Armenian doctor from Lebanon. They all remembered their medical school training and Krikor's papers that they had studied.

Shortly after his mother passed away much too young, he continued his research in immunology in Minnesota with 3M. Along the way, he helped his father Manase realize a life-long dream to visit his ancestral Armenia. They travelled there together by way of Moscow. Manase was a man of few words but there is no doubt that Krikor helped him fill a void that he had carried all his life. When Manase's health declined, Krikor, ever the faithful son, came home to Watertown to help his sisters care for him.

He moved to California to develop immunoassays for Baxter Hyland before returning home once again.

Krikor was a doting uncle. In his final months, nothing lifted his spirits more or put an enormous smile on his face more than a visit, video or photo from his seven nieces and nephews, or from his grandnieces and grandnephews.

Krikor had no use for anything for himself. Whatever he had, he would use to help someone else. In his retirement years, he worked at the Armenian Library and Museum to help preserve his beloved heritage. He never owned a house but loved gardening and landscaping and knew a lot about masonry.

A funeral service was held at the Armenian Memorial Church in Watertown on October 5 followed by the interment at Ridgelawn Cemetery in Watertown not far from his mother and father. Memorial gifts may be made to the AMAA for the Bethel School of Aleppo. □

## Samuel Hekemian, Jr.

Samuel Hekemian, Jr. of Oradell, NJ, former President of the Armenian Missionary Association of America, passed away on August 21, 2018. He was 89.

Born on March 29, 1929 to Samuel and Elizabeth Hekemian in Paterson, NJ, he grew up in Hasbrouck Heights, NJ. He was



the beloved husband of Sandra and the loving father of Peter (Genevieve), Jeffrey (Rachel), Richard and Mark (Brittany), all of whom survive him. His six grandchildren - Jake, Jersey, Christian, Juliet, Gwyneth and Jeffrey - were the crown jewels of his life.

Sam was the Chairman & President of The S. Hekemian Group in Englewood, NJ (and prior to that, Hekemian & Co.), working as a residential and commercial real estate developer for nearly 60 years. In these roles, he was able to make a tremendous impact throughout the state of New Jersey.

An avid member of the Armenian community, he served as President of the Armenian Missionary Association of America and as an elder at the Armenian Presbyterian Church. He also served on the Board of the Hackensack University Medical Center.

Sam graduated from Hasbrouck Heights High School in 1947 and continued his education at Rutgers University, where he earned his B.S. in Business Administration in 1951. He had a passion for gardening and growing vegetables at home, and greatly enjoyed time spent on the beach in Loveladies, Long Beach Island.

Memorial gifts may be made to the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus, NJ. □

The AMAA Board of Directors and the staff wish to extend their heartfelt condolences to the families of the following deceased friends.

- \* **Nora Antonian**  
*Encino, CA*
- \* **Nerses and Alice Festekjian**  
*Northridge, CA*
- \* **Hayrabed Geukgeuzian**  
*Fairlawn, NJ*
- \* **Berge Kayaian**  
*Fresh Meadows, NY*
- \* **Glorya Tezekjian LaSpesa**  
*Glendale, AZ*
- \* **Richard J. Manoogian**  
*Fresno, CA*
- \* **Aron Margosian**  
*Visalia, CA*
- \* **Jack Parnoutsoukian**  
*Hughson, CA*
- \* *Memorials designated for AMAA*



## Featured Books



**Armenian English Diglot  
New Testament**  
*Western Armenian and  
Today's English version.*  
Item # 508 - Price \$15.00



**Սուրբ Գրային Զերոսներ  
Մովսես եւ Դովնան  
Heroes of the Bible: Moses  
and Jonah**  
*Story book in Armenian for  
ages 5-10 (includes CD).*  
**Published by AEUNA**  
Item # 402CO - Price: \$10.00



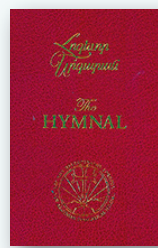
**History of the Armenian  
Evangelical Churches of  
North and South America**  
*History of AEUNA churches,  
their founders, locations,  
pastors, leaders, and programs.*  
**Published by AEUNA**  
Item # 401CO - Price: \$10.00



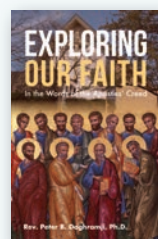
**A Century of Armenian  
Protestantism 1846-1946**  
(Second Printing)  
*The author recounts the  
history of the Armenian  
Evangelical movement  
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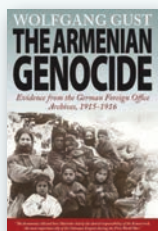
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## Received With Thanks

The AMAA acknowledges with gratitude receipt of the following publication:

**TOWARD LIGHT AND LIFE - Reflections of Catholicos Karekin Hovsepian**, Edited and Translated by Roberta Ervine and Michael Daniel Findikyan - 2018.

**Back Cover Photo: 'The Choir of the Second Armenian Evangelical Church of Aintab, 1911'** (Courtesy of Perla Nazarian Kotoyan)  
Below are the names of the choir members. There are just a few people who are unidentified. If you recognize them, please call the AMAA (201.265.2607) or e-mail ([amaanews@amaa.org](mailto:amaanews@amaa.org)). We greatly appreciate your help.

**Front row seated L to R:** Ephronia Nazarian Khachadourian, Yervant Nazarian, Zekie Levonian Kuljian, Levon Levonian (Toh (9<sup>th</sup>) Levon - founder of Ousoumnasirats school in Aleppo), Alice Bezjian, Rosa Haleblan, Jamil Haleblan. **Middle row L to R:** Mariam (last name unknown), Aznive DeMirjian, Vartouhi Loshkhadjian, Rosa Jebejian Hovnanian (mother of H. Philip Hovnanian), Marie Bezjian Sarkissian, Beatrice Nazarian Nahabedian, Marie Krikorian, Nouritsa Levonian, (first name unknown) Khachadourian. **Back row L to R:** Nerses Barsoumian, Rosa Berejiklian Chamitchian, Unknown, Unknown, Marie Levonian, Adour Levonian, Hripsimeh Levonian Laleyan, Alexan Bezjian, Victoria Sarkissian Levonian (Wife of Lutfi Khoja Levonian), Beatrice Danelian, Levon Levonian (8<sup>th</sup> Levon).

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**The Choir of the Second Armenian Evangelical Church of Aintab, 1911 (names listed on page 46)**